DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 124 943 CS 202 764

AUTHOR	Dimock, Edward C., Jr., Ed.
TITLE	Bengal Literature and History.
INSTITUTION	Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Asian Studies Center.
PUB DATE	67
NOTE	172p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$8.69 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Asian Studies; *Bengali; *Literary Criticism; *Literary History; *Literature Appreciation; Medieval History; Medieval Literature; Modern History; Nineteenth Century Literature; *Social History; Twentieth Century Literature
IDENTIFIERS	*Bengali Literature; India; Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The unifying theme of the papers in this book is the use of creative literature as source material for the study of cultural history. Titles and authors of the papers are: "Encounter and Growth in Bengali Literature, A Survey of Medieval Bengali Literature" by T.W. Clark; "The Hindu Chiefdom in Middle Bengali Literature" by Ronald Inden; "Two Autobiographical Accounts from Middle Bengali Literature" by G. Wayne Kilpatrick; "The Ideal Man in Society, in Vaisnava and Vaisnava-sahajiya Literature" by Edward C. Dimock, Jr.; "Encounter and Growth in Bengali Literature, A Survey of Modern Bengali Literature" by T.W. Clark; "Communal Attitudes in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" by Rachel R. Van Meter; "The Dimensions of Literature as an Analytical Tool for the Study of Bengal, 1800-1830" by David Kopf; and "Modernization and Cultural Change, The Self-Image and World-View of the Bengali Intelligentsia as Found in the Writings of the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1830-1870" by Warren M. Gunderson. (JM)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED124943

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

APR 13 1976

BENGAL

LITERATURE AND HISTORY

Edited by

Edward C. Dimock, Jr.

With Contributions by

T. W. Clark
Ronald Inden
Edward C. Dimock, Jr.
G. Wayne Kilpatrick
Warren M. Gunderson
David Kopf
Rachel R. Van Meter

Published by

Asian Studies Center
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan

September, 1967

Occasional Papers

CS 202 764

CONTENTS

EDITOR'S PREFACE
Edward C. Dimock, Jr. 1

SECTION I

STUDIES IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

ENCOUNTER AND GROWTH IN BENGALI LITERATURE
A Survey of Medieval Bengali Literature
T. W. Clark 9

STUDY I: THE HINDU CHIEFDOM
IN MIDDLE BENGALI LITERATURE
Ronald Inden 21

STUDY II: TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS
FROM MIDDLE BENGALI LITERATURE
G. Wayne Kilpatrick 47

STUDY III: THE IDEAL MAN IN SOCIETY
in Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā literature
Edward C. Dimock, Jr. 67

SECTION II

STUDIES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

ENCOUNTER AND GROWTH IN BENGALI LITERATURE
A Survey of Modern Bengali Literature
T. W. Clark 83

STUDY IV: COMMUNAL ATTITUDES IN THE NINETEENTH
AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES
Rachel R. Van Meter 93

STUDY V: THE DIMENSIONS OF LITERATURE AS AN
ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR THE STUDY OF BENGAL, 1800-1830
David Kopf 105

STUDY VI: MODERNIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE
The Self-Image and World-view of the Bengali
Intelligentsia as Found in the Writings
of the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 1830-1870
Warren M. Gunderson 127

EDITOR'S PREFACE

It should not be necessary to point out to anyone who might pick up this book that there are more speakers of Bengali than there are of French (a fact however which is of some use when one is trying to persuade a Dean that the language is worthy of study). Those who come to this book will presumably already have a high degree of sophistication about things Indian and Pakistani, and hopefully another book on the general subject will need no defense. But there are those among scholars who feel that such concentration as this book demonstrates on one fairly small area of a vast and complicated part of the world is at this stage in the development of Indian and Pakistani studies parochial and premature. It is only fair to explain our standpoint to them.

First, however, let me mention some historical facts which will help put the book into perspective. By 1964-65, a fair number of students of Bengali language and culture had come out of programs in the United States, primarily from the Universities of Chicago and Pennsylvania, to supplement those who had worked in Bengali studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London, and in less programmed ways at other institutions in various parts of the world. These students and teachers knew each other well, from classrooms in their limited number of home universities -- five of the writers represented in this volume, for example, were participants in a seminar in the Cultural and Literary History of Bengal at Chicago in 1961 -- or from meeting in India or Pakistan while doing dissertation or other research. And when members of this group went off to teach at institutions spread geographically from New York to Vancouver, the stimulation of previous exchanges was missed.

Secondly, it happened that in 1965 T. W. Clark, Professor of Bengali at the School of Oriental and African Studies, was in the United States, teaching at the University of Pennsylvania and helping develop the program in Bengali at Michigan State University. It was decided that this would be an opportune time for a seminar, hopefully the first of a series (as indeed it turned out to be), which would discuss problems common to those professionally concerned with the study of the culture of the eastern part of the Indian sub-continent. The first seminar, it was felt, might focus on a general problem, such as the use of literary sources for the study of cultural history. Professor Van Meter of Michigan State, by whose initiative the whole seminar was organized, gained the assistance of Professor Clark and Professor William Ross, Director of the Asian Studies Center at Michigan State, through whose good offices the financial support for the seminar came;

and the seminar was run on August 25 and 26 of that year.

Seven papers were read at this first meeting, Professor Clark's being divided into two parts, one introducing the medieval studies and the other the studies of the 19th century. The number of papers read, however, is not indicative either of the number of scholars involved nor of the range of the discussion the papers provoked. It is unfortunate that we have no record of the remarks made from the floor by Professor Barrie Morrison, a historian now at the University of British Columbia, Professor Marcus Franda, a political scientist at Colgate University, and others, from a variety of disciplines, recently returned from India or Pakistan. Not fully anticipating the success with which the seminar would meet, and considering ourselves more than anything else a loosely constituted group of friends, we had in the initial planning stages no thought of publication. The proceedings of the second conference, held at the University of Missouri in the summer of 1966, and those of the third, at the University of Michigan in 1967, will better indicate the breadth of interest of scholars working on the area.

But inducements toward such an exchange of ideas on Bengal were not entirely random. That Bengal should be an area of research by an adequate number of people has been determined by a number of things. First, it has become increasingly obvious, in the brief time since medieval and modern India have been considered fields of study apart from Empire History, that sufficiently deep knowledge involves, for most disicplines, competence in language. It is equally obvious that most scholars will never know more than one or two of the modern languages, plus the Sanskrit or Persian necessary for some studies well enough to do research in depth. Bengali is then one of several possible choices.

Secondly, for social and intellectual historians, for students of literature, and for medievalists, Bengal is a rich area: the historian is intrigued that Bengal was in the vanguard of the fascinating educational, political and social movements of the 19th century; the student of literature finds that Bengali has as long and lush a literary tradition as any modern language in the sub-continent; and the medievalist learns to his delight not only that there is in Bengali a tremendous fund of source material, but that Bengali scholars themselves have worked long and hard to study and to make those materials available for study by others. Both critical writings and texts are often available in excellent editions.

But both of these sets of reasons merely suggest why some people may choose to go into Bengali studies rather than Marathi or Tamil. Neither suggests the more basic intellectual reason for what some scholars might term a "parochial" approach. The term "parochial" indeed suggests a serious criticism.

For a great many years the important concern of Indo-European philologists and a selective transmission process combined to give the west a distorted picture of India. The early western scholars were concerned with Sanskrit as it shed light on Indo-European through its relationship with Greek and Latin. And Indian scholars who were consulted in these matters were concerned to transmit what to them was the great contribution of the Sanskrit high culture: the Vedantic systems of theology and philosophy, highly structured and delicate poetry, religion of fantastic antiquity, and intricate legalistic systems. And the west developed a notion that Indian society was highly structured, with Brahmans at the top and Sudras at the bottom and others below the Sudras somehow beyond the Pale. For the rest, India was a steamy, diseased, overcrowded place, full of dangerous jungles and people caught up in all manner of unnamable superstitions and occult rituals.

This picture has changed, at least in the eyes of some. We now know that Brahmans are not always at the top of the heap, nor Śudras necessarily near the bottom. Ronald Inden's paper on the Hindu kingdoms in Bengal shows us this -- and destroys as well another common oversimplification, that Muslim domination was rigid and complete. We know that Sanskrit as the vehicle of truth has at times been seriously opposed by such upstart languages as Bengali, as Clark has shown. We now know that there is more to the total religious picture than monolithic theological systems and austere sages meditating on mountain tops, as Kilpatrick and Dimock reiterate. And that the nineteenth century, far from being typified by cummerbunded gentlemen dispensing the pax Brittanica with severity tempered by good sense and fair play, was a time of great social, psychological, and intellectual ferment, in which Hindus, Muslims, and British were all caught up, is shown us clearly and precisely by Van Meter, Kopf, and Gunderson.

The danger which the term "parochial" suggests is that we go too far in reaction to the incompleteness of the truth we saw before. For although in the new light India presents us with a far more varied, complex, and difficult picture than we had suspected was there, it is still true that there is an element of unity running throughout it all. The Vedic tradition does permeate all parts of the vast sub-continent, though not into all segments of the society. Islam is there also, as a separate but in a sense unifying tradition. And it is true that Sanskrit provides a reservoir of prototypes, images, and perhaps most important, pride, from which all Hindu members of the society, and some Muslims can drink; and where the Sanskrit cannot provide, the Persian tradition often can, across time and social boundaries.

The catalogue could go on and on. The point is that we are far beyond simplistic thinking. We can and must begin to examine in necessarily minute detail the single strands which make up the complex fabric of India. We can never return to the point at which unproven generalizations are satisfactory. But neither should we make the mistake of thinking that the analysis of single strands is the ultimate goal. Microscopic examination is an end, but not the end; the larger and more important goal is to discover how the total fabric is woven. Thus, from one point of view, Bengal is a microcosm. It has (loosely speaking) a single language, and is from other points of view manageably unitary. And insofar as it is a microcosm, examination will also suggest the realities of the macrocosm which it represents. But from the other point of view, equally valid, Bengal, like all other parts of the sub-continent, is unique. All aspects of it are in themselves fascinating and highly individual, and as such worthy of study and of understanding. It is through the unit that we are attempting to approach the totality.

The theme of the seminar was "The use of creative literature as source material for the study of cultural history", and this is the theme which ties the papers in this book loosely together. But the approach to this problem is in no way theoretical; each paper is a case study, and the reader is left largely to draw his own conclusions. This, it seems to me, is good; it is complimentary to the reader, and it provides hard data for studies not necessarily related to the literary. Inden's data will be of interest, for example, to the anthropologist as well as the historian, Kilpatrick's to the student of religion, and so on. At the same time, there is a unity in the book, and this comes from a concern with a genuine problem that all the writers represented here -- and all students of South Asia -- have to face: in the absence of historical records other than the Muslim chronicles and other highly particularistic texts, how do we ascertain the details of history which will enable us to do the requisite type of precise examination? The cases presented in the book show us a variety of approaches. What they have in common is the conviction that more textual work needs to be done. The papers show more by example than preaching just what can result.

One final technical point ought to be made, and that has to do with the perpetual problem of transcription or transliteration. Scholars of Bengali have very firm ideas on what transliteration system ought to be used for the language. On the one hand there are those who insist that Bengali should be transliterated according to the accepted system for Sanskrit. The trouble is that such monstrosities as Ravīndranātha, the first name of the poet Tagore, often result; when the poet signed himself in English Rabindranath, should we not grant him his preference? On the other hand there are those who feel that the transliteration should approximate as closely as possible the pronunciation of the language; thus the name of the city might turn out to be Nobɔddip, totally incomprehensible to those Sanskritists and others who had seen the name Navadvip or Navadvipa on maps or in other texts. And in between there is a whole range of opinion, including that which feels that the Bengali pronunciation system ought to be used in the text of English writings, and the Sanskritic system in quotations from Bengali texts and in footnotes. Having attempted to synchronize all this, and having offended some of my friends by doing so, I too have landed somewhere in the middle, thereby surely offending others. Krishna will then appear as Krishna (not Kṛṣṇa) throughout the book, this being a name now fairly familiar to English readers Krittivās will however turn up as Krittibās and Krttivāsa, and probably in several other ways, according to the taste of the writer.

The book, despite the apology, might still seem too parochial and too technical to some. But others will, I think, recognize it as a kind of landmark. Universities offer courses of Garibaldi and Dylan Thomas. Why not Rabindranath, or Bengal in the 16th century?

Edward C. Dimock, Jr.

The University of Chicago, 1966

SECTION I

STUDIES IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

ENCOUNTER AND GROWTH IN BENGALI LITERATURE

A Survey of Medieval Bengali Literature

T. W. Clark

School of Oriental and African Studies

University of London

The purpose of this paper is to suggest certain fields of study in which cooperation between students of literature on the one hand and historians, sociologists and geographers on the other might prove fruitful.

Medieval Bengali literature extends roughly over the period 1350 A.D. to 1800 A.D.; but as there are certain social and religious traditions which existed during this period but which did not originate in it, it is necessary first to look briefly at the history of earlier centuries when these traditions came to life, and to take account of the geography of the whole area and of the distribution of its diverse ethnic groups. Take first the terrain about which at present our knowledge is far from complete; the terrain not of Bengal as we know it today but of north-east India;[1] for the word Bengal in its present connotation is a neologism, the name of a geographical, social and political entity of later origins. The map in, say 1000 A.D. must have presented a very different appearance from that which is found in modern atlases. Certainly the principal rivers were there, but where precisely did they flow? Considerable changes of course have taken place. Some we know of, others we do not. The Tista River for example once flowed into the Ganges; now it flows in the Brahmaputra. The Bhagirathi, one of the main distributaries of the Ganges, once flowed south through Murshidabad, where now it is dried up, except for a few pools which mark its erstwhile bed. The delta was marshy and uninhabitable, but how far inland or out to sea did it extend? Were there distributaries of the great rivers which have disappeared? The riverine journeys which are described in several texts could be a prime source of information, if they were interpreted in detail.

In both the early and medieval periods there were movements of peoples into and within the area; but it is not always clear what routes they took and what tribes they came into contact with, and in what order. There was a re-brahmanisation of certain districts during the Sen era.

Literary references mention Ballāl Sen as the patron of these Brahmans, the founder of the order of Kulins and the guarantor of the privileges they preserve so jealously even today.[2] What was the nature and extent of Brahmanical influence on the cults and religious practices of the earlier peoples? After the Brahmans came the Muslims. What routes did they take, what tribes did they subjugate and convert; and were there localities to which their influence and teaching did not extend? These are important questions. Literary evidence can provide some answers, but they need to be verified by reference to political and social history derived from other sources.

Ethnic distribution is obscure also. There were Aryans, Dravidians and others who had retreated eastward at the time of the Aryan invasions, and many aboriginal tribes of whom comparatively little is known,[3] though a number of them are mentioned in medieval texts. Religious cults too were various. There were Hindus, of varying degrees of orthodoxy, Budddhists, different schools of Tantricists, and some aboriginals who preserved more primitive beliefs. Much information about the deities worshipped is to be found in medieval texts: the river goddesses, notably Gaṅgā; spirits who controlled disease, Śitalā the goddess of smallpox, for example; Dakṣiṇ Rāi, the god of tigers; Manasā, the snake goddess; to name only some. Vrata rites and folk tales allude to others. Into this confused picture of different cults came two forces which made for some measure of uniformity, the Brahmans in the 12th century and the Muslims in the 13th. As the authority of the Brahmans extended some of the tribal peoples began to be received into the caste hierarchy at a level which was presumably dictated by their traditional occupations. Some of the local deities achieved respectability and were admitted to the Hindu pantheon, Caṇḍī and Manasā for example. Others seemed to have remained on the periphery. Then after 1200 A.D., the tribal peoples who were already under pressure to accept lowly positions in the caste structure, were offered the alternative of Islam; and a direct encounter began. Nevertheless, because of the nature of the terrain, broken in so many places by rivers and by low hills, the pressure exerted by Brahmans and Moulvis probably varied from locality to locality; and there may well have been pockets in which the ancient cults survived.

The earliest Bengali text extant is a collection of some 47 lyrics, caryāpadas, which were preserved in a manuscript discovered in Nepal at the beginning of the present century. Precise dates of composition have not been determined, but they probably fall between 1000 and 1150 A.D. The poems are religious in intention and reflect those esoteric beliefs and yogic practices to which the name sahajiyā is usually given. They enter into the present subject only because of their influence on later religious history. Though because of their esoteric nature the meaning of the caryāpadas is obscure, one fact definitely emerges: their teaching is non-Brahmanical. Religious ceremonies which involved priestly function are condemned. The ultimate goal they preach, mahāsukha, is to be achieved only by the initiate's submitting himself to his guru and implicitly following his instructions and the physical exercises he prescribes. What these prescriptions were we can only vaguely determine; but one of them involved extra-marital intercourse between the initiate and a female of the Ḍom tribe. This type of relationship, purged of its coarseness, constitutes the underlying theme of later Vaiṣṇava poetry, both before and after Caitanya.

After the Muslim invasion in 1200 A.D., there followed as far as literature is concerned a blank period of about 150 years. Sukumar Sen calls it the dark age of Bengali literature.[4] The Buddhist monasteries were destroyed, and Brahman scholars and others, including poets, were scattered, some of them seeking refuge in the Himalayas. Not a single literary work belonging to this period exists to throw light on contemporaneous life and culture. Nevertheless it can be inferred from the quality of the later compositions which have survived that this was not in fact a dead period. Poetic activity there must have been, because the compositions which began to emerge from the end of the 14th century are not crude and ill-constructed innovations as might have been expected had the poets been learning their craft or working on material which was then being shaped for the first time. Krittibās, Mukundarām and other leading authors of the 15th and 16th centuries were poets of high quality. Their works are remarkable for their stylistic maturity and structural coherence. They were masters of their craft, but it was a craft they had inherited from unknown bards who lived during, or in some cases perhaps before, this so-called dark age. In both style and subject-matter therefore, these later poets must have been heirs of an established tradition. It is difficult to explain their success on any other hypothesis.

There was a remarkable outpouring of *kāvya* poetry during the first centuries of the medieval period. One of the factors responsible for it was without doubt the interest taken in indigenous compositions by some of the Muslim rulers. Passages in praise of princely patrons occur in a number of texts. Hindu poets were received into local courts where they were treated with respect. Some of them were awarded Muslim titles which they occasionally used in their signature verses rather than their own names.

Not all references to Muslim rulers however were prompted by gratitude for favours received. There are autobiographical passages which relate how the authors were forced to leave their homes and migrate to other parts of the country by reason of oppression and the high taxes levied against them. 'The toll collectors' wrote Mukundarām, 'were cheats and rascals: they imposed fines on persons for commodities belonging to others; they committed robbery in broad daylight.'[5] This excerpt, translated by Sukumar Sen, is part of a long complaint against one Mamud Sarif and his revenue minister Rayzada. Mention of taxation is to be found in other texts, and further search might well unearth more. There is a humorous description of the levying of a local market tax in Baṛu Caṇḍīdās's *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtan*. Rādhā and her friends were making their way to a nearby market to sell their dairy produce, when they were stopped by Krishna who was disguised as a tax collector. He examined their wares one by one to see if they contained anything taxable.

Muslim rulers were not the only oppressors who provoked poets to protest. The treatment of people of lowly status by certain Brahmans created resentment also. One work, Śunya Purāṇa, which belongs to an early tradition though its precise date is unknown, narrates how a tribal people, known as Sat-Dharmī, appealed to a Muslim prince to save them from the intolerable tyranny of the Brahmans. D. C. Sen comments as follows: 'What historal incident is referred to.........is not known. But it unmistakably points to a general feeling of gratification with which the Sat-Dharmīs watched the oppression of the Brahmans by the Mohammadans at Jajpur, which they attributed to divine wrath for the atrocities committed upon them.'6 This episode suggests that there existed at least one factor other than the force of Muslim arms which was responsible for conversions to Islam.

The corpus of medieval Bengali literature, which is entirely in verse, - prose being a 19th century growth - , comprises works by both Hindu and Muslim authors, but those of the former preponderate.

Hindu poetry is generally classified as religious, and to the extent that it has to do with gods and their dealings with men the classification is acceptable. Some of it reflects a true devotion, but much of it is no more religious than is the Iliad. The Hindu gods and goddesses in the maṅgalkāvya resemble the deities of Olympus in more ways than one. Three themes predominate. The mahākāvya poems derive from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata traditions, the principal authors respectively being Krittibās and Kasirām Dās. Secondly, there are the maṅgalkāvya themes, which are concerned with the emergence of new deities, many of them female, and the establishment of their cults on earth. (These deities are new only in the sense that they had been newly accepted into the Hindu pantheon.) The principal authors here are Vipradās, Vijay Gupta and Mukundarām. The third category comprises the vast bulk of Rādhā-Krishna poetry, the leading authors being Baṛu Caṇḍīdās before Caitanya, and Locandās, Jñāndās and Govinda Dās after.

The Bengali Rāmāyaṇas and Mahābhāratas sprang from the same traditions as the Sanskrit mahākāvya, but they are original works, not translations. They differ considerably both in episodic content and in emotional emphasis from Valmiki. The characters of the stories, their habits, ceremonies and dress, even to the cosmetics of the women, and to some extent the landscape too, are Bengali. In comparison with the Sanskrit poems there is a marked diminution in devotional intention, and so a shift in the direction of the authors' sympathies. Rāma in Krittibās's poem is more of the human warrior and husband and less of the god, at whose hands even defeat and death are meritorious, then he is in Valmiki's version. Very evident too is the shift in sympathetic regard, especially in Krittibās's final canto, in which Rāma, after his victory over Rāvaṇa and his recovery of Sītā, is required by his Brahmans to banish Sītā to the forest on the ground that in spite of the ordeals she had successfully undergone, it was unreasonable to assume that she could have preserved her chastity while in the power of her abductor. In this episode, Rāma for all his supposedly divine attributions, is portrayed as a weak, gullible husband, lacking in faith in his wife and consenting to her persecution. Sītā is par excellence the heroine; and the stature of Rāma suffers appreciably by contrast. The moving presentation of her distress and her fortitude in suffering leaves no doubt where the author's sympathies lay. This superiority in the portrayal of female characters so early apparent in Bengali literature has persisted down to modern times. Bankimcandra, Tagore and Śaratcandra Chatterji in their day too were more successful with their heroines than with their heroes. This fact is probably associated with the importance attached to *devī* in Bengali life and sentiment. She is the goddess whom Bengalis worship; she is the wife in the home whom they revere; she is the heroine whom they acclaim in literature.

Preference for the female character is observable in some of the *maṅgalkāvya*. Śakti, the female aspect of godhood, prevails over Śiva, the male aspect. At the human level Behulā, in the *Manasā-maṅgalkāvya*, far outshines her husband Lakhindar. She, the true and faithful wife, is the truly heroic person in the story. In spite of indescribable hardships her fortitude never falters; and that combined with her resourcefulness and courage have made her very dear to the hearts of the Bengalis. She is still one of their favourite heroines. In the Rādhā-Krishna poems too I get the feeling that the devout are more deeply stirred by vicissitudes of Rādhā than by those of her divine lover.

The attacks upon Śiva by Śakti, under the guise of Caṇḍī in one story and Manasā in another, lend feasibility, as a tentative hypothesis, to the view that in them may be reflected the struggles between different tribes at a comparatively early stage in the emergence of Bengali civilisation. According to the texts, the first worshippers of Caṇḍī were hunters, and those of Manasā fishermen and herdsmen, people in both cases whose way of life was probably nomadic. Śiva on the other hand was a farming god, worshipped by tillers of the soil who were likely to be more static in the conduct of their occupation. Tribes on the move tend to take their gods with them and to involve them in their conflicts with other tribes, such as would naturally arise when nomads impinged on the holdings of agricultural people. Whether this hypothesis proves tenable or not, the fact remains that the principal motif of these *maṅgalkāvya* is the seduction of the worshippers of a farming deity by the goddesses of hunters, fishermen and herdsmen, the overthrow of male power by female.

The *maṅgalkāvya* also have much to say about different patterns of worship and the exercise of priestly function. In the Caṇḍī cycle, the goddess approached Kālketu, a hunter who earned his living by slaughtering wild animals and selling their flesh, and persuaded him to accept the duty of propagator of her cult. The lowly status of the butcher in the Hindu hierarchy is prefigured in Kālketu's attitude to Caṇḍī when she appeared to him in his forest hut. She was in the guise of a young girl of high degree, and Kālketu pleased with her to depart from him lest she should be defiled by proximity to one of so unclean an occupation as his. She was not deterred. She first subdued his opposition; and then empowered and equipped him for the duties he was to perform, which were to set up her emblem, a water pot, in his home, to worship her thrice weekly, to found a kingdom in which she might be worshipped regularly and finally to erect a temple in her honour. The last step marked the formal institutionalisation of the Caṇḍī cult. The worship of Manasā passed from fishermen to herdsmen to household servants, and from them slowly into the families of merchants. The story of the poems centres round the resistance of a rich merchant to the introduction of the cult into his household and his final capitulation. Initially the rites were performed by individuals or groups of individuals, who employed as emblems water jars and sprigs of *śij*, also known as *manasā* tree. Later, however, as in the case of the Caṇḍī cult, temples were built and the rites were presided over by Brahmans; and Manasā herself, who had once been abused by her merchant adversary as a 'one-eyed witch', advanced to full Śakti status with the title of ādimātā, primal mother.

The characters in the *maṅgal* stories are wealthy merchants, who had made their wealth by foreign, sea-going trade. They owned large fleets of cargo vessels in which they carried a wide range of commodities for disposal in foreign ports, bringing back with them a variety of imported merchandise. Lists of goods exported and imported are given in the poems, as are the names of ports called at. This information might be of interest to the economic historian. One other point arises in this connection: were these traders the carriers of culture and art from India to south-east Asia? The *Caṇḍīmaṅgalkāvya* contains an episode in which the goddess forced a foreign king to release two merchants who were her devotees. It is for consideration whether this incident is to be interpreted as a confrontation between Indian and non-Indian religions on foreign soil.

A religious revival took place in north-east India in the 16th century. It is reflected in the biographies of Caitanya, which also set forth much of the theology of the new movement, and in the *padāvalī*, lyrics on the Rādhā-Krishna theme, which have survived in very large numbers. This neo-Vaiṣṇava revival stemmed from the sublimation and mystical reinterpretation by Caitanya of the Rādhā-Krishna stories which had been known in Indian and Bengali literature for centuries. These stories were made popular in Bengal by Jayadeva's poem, *Gītāgovinda*, composed in Sanskrit at the court of Lakṣmanasena in the 12th century. Its presentation of the theme was secular rather than religious. The 14th (?) century poem *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtan*, a much longer collection of lyrics, was influenced by the spirit of Jayadeva's poem. It also owes something to the *caryāpada* poems, particularly in respect of the practice of extra-marital liason which has already been mentioned; for in it Rādhā is the girl-wife of a herdsman named Āyan Ghoṣ. The *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtan*, also is essentially secular in tone. For all his supposed godhood Krishna is a very human lover. He pursues his love with wily persistence. Rādhā, who to begin with is little more than a child, submits to his first embraces with reluctance and trepidation. Later however she returns his passion without reserve. At the hands of Caitanya the relationship between the two underwent a sublime metamorphosis. He interpreted their love-play, *līlā*, as an allegory of the human and the divine, and by mystic insight was himself able to partake of it. His disciples saw in his trances and ecstatic utterances emanations of divinity, and came in time to believe not only that he participated in the divine *līlā* but also that in his own being both Rādhā and Krishna were subsumed. Caitanya taught that the way to absorption in the divine was by *bhakti*, devotion. He was not the first teacher of *bhakti* in India, but he was certainly its most influential advocate in Bengal. He accepted and enjoyed the stories of the *Gītāgovinda* and *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtan* but he sublimated their erotic content. His disciples wrote lyrics on the Rādhā-Krishna theme which became the hymns of the movement. The writing of hymns continued into the 18th century and beyond, but by then the inspiration had waned and devotional purity had largely been lost, but the sexual imagery remained.

The *bhakti* movement had certain important social consequences. Disapproval of rigid caste exclusiveness was implied in the teaching of some 15th century *bhaktas*,[7] but Caitanya made it more explicit. His teaching was for all men irrespective of caste or creed. Some of his closest disciples were men of low caste, and one, Haridās, was Muslim. To allow the ordinary people to participate in acts of worship he invented a ritual device known as *saṃkīrtan*, the joint chanting of the name of God, and even he was surprised and at times embarrassed by the enthusiasm of the popular response. The cult of *bhakti* made an appeal to Bengali Muslims also, and two poets at the Arakan court, Daulat Qāzi and Ālāol, wrote hymns on the Rādhā-Krishna theme. The extent to which the Muslim cult of Sufīsm, which had already entered Bengal, and neo-Vaiṣṇavism combined to influence the religious life of members of both communities and to bring them closer together has yet to be fully examined. Both taught *bhakti* and the songs of both had a wide popularity; and it is at least possible that some Hindus and some Muslims listened to the hymns of both together.

Poetical works by Muslim authors can be traced back at least to the 15th century. Hindu poets, as has been mentioned, wrote on puranic and other themes from Indian tradition, learned and popular, but the Muslim worked mostly on legends which emanated from Persia and further west. Three themes were particularly popular: Iuchaf and Jelekhā (Yusuf and Zuleikha), Hānifā, and the Marsiya or elegiac theme. Iuchaf is the Joseph of the Old Testament, and Jelekhā, unnamed in the Bible, is Potiphar's wife. She disappears from the Bible narrative after Joseph's incarceration, but in the longer versions in Turkish and Persian literature, she comes back into his life, and ultimately marries him. The legend is mentioned in the Qurān, but it was the Turkish and Persian versions the Indian Muslim poets drew on. The ramifications of the Hānifā legend are many and long. What little the narratives have of history is mostly submerged in fable; and miraculous incidents of a fairy tale variety are mingled with religious teaching and Islamic propaganda. The Marsiya poems describe the deaths of Hasān and Hosen, the sons of the Prophet, and the massacre at Karbālā, which is commemorated by Muslims in the festival of Maharram.

Little detailed research has yet been done in this branch of Bengali literature,[8] but even a casual acquaintance with it can discern two features which are worthy of note, one is religious and social, the other linguistic. The presentation of the divine being in some of the poems is unorthodox even to the extent of seeming un-Islamic. Allah is depicted as sharing many of the characteristics of the Hindu deities in the *maṅgalkāvya*. He is capricious and often vindictive. He punishes with savage severity those who disregard his commands, and even those who in the excitement of the moment forget to call His name. He nurses grievances, and at times appears to derive pleasure from bloodshed. The second feature, that of the language of Muslim authors, is also of social significance. A Muslim poet can in general be distinguished from a Hindu poet by the subject matter of his works; but he cannot be distinguished by the language he wrote in. Apart from a few experiments with Brajbuli, the literary dialect associated with the *padāvalī*, Muslim poets uniformly employed the literary standard Bengali of the period. Vocabulary elements of Perso-Arabic origin were being received into Bengali over the centuries and passing into regular use; yet the Muslim writers made no greater use of them than did the Hindus. A statistical test-check has revealed that the only passages in the early literature of Bengal which have a more than average Perso-Arabic vocabulary content are to be found in the works of Hindu poets only.[9]

The literary evidence makes clear that in the confrontation of Hinduism and Islam in Bengal the new Muslims, whether they were converts from Hinduism, Buddhism or the primitive cults, still remained essentially Bengali. Through all the vicissitudes and trials of subjugation and oppression they still clung to their own language. They adopted Islam as the religion, it is true, but it was an Islam shot through with substantial vestiges of their earlier beliefs and practices, including something of the caste system. Even Allah himself, as has been pointed out, was characterised by certain marks of Hindu and tribal deities. Hindu literary forms were retained. There exists a Muslim *maṅgalkāvya* in honour of Gāzi Pīr, who though he was a Muslim saint behaved in a manner remarkably similar to the behaviour of the Hindu deities in other *maṅgalkāvya*. Evidence of the extent to which the two communities were growing together is contained in the emergence of a new deity, who, according to Sukumar Sen, was called *Satyanārāyaṇ* by Hindus and *Satya Pīr* by Muslims. 'A North Bengal writer, Kṛṣṇaharidās, wrote the biggest poem of the genre. As literary product this poetry is valueless, except that it bears evidence of a widespread attempt at a rapprochement between the two major faiths. The new-fangled deity Satya Pīr and Satya-Nārāyan achieved high popularity in the 18th century and we find the best writers of the century, Ghanarām Kaviratna, Rāmevar Bhaṭṭācārya and Bhāratcandra Rāy writing short Satyanārāyaṇ-Pāñcāli poems.'[10]

The condition of the Bengali language in the latter part of the medieval period suggest either that there had been an effective 'rapprochement' between Hindus and Muslims at the linguistic level or, as may be more likely, that they had never fallen apart in the language they spoke. Words of Sanskrit and Prakrit origin preponderate in the Bengali vocabulary, but it is clear that there had been a sufficient naturalisation of words of Perso-Arabic origin to give the common language of the 18th century a mixed character. Bhāratcandra Rāy, who was a Brahman educated in both Sanskrit and Persian, gives striking support to the theory that Hindus and Muslims were not separated by language. In a passage in one of his works, which was brought to my attention by Q.A.M. Mannan, he stated that he proposed to write not in a Sanskritised language nor in a Persianised language, but in *yabanī miśal bhāṣā*. *Yabanī* was a name applied to people of Muslim origin; *miśal* means mixed; and *bhāṣā* of course means language. The reason he gave for using *yabanī miśal bhāṣā* was that it was the language ordinary people understood and spoke. His statement suggests that in the middle of the 18th century spoken Bengali had a mixed vocabulary in which there was a sufficiently high proportion of Perso-Arabic words to justify calling it *yabanī*. This fact must be borne in mind when in a later paper we consider the vocabulary bifurcation on communal lines which commenced in the 19th century.

NOTES

[1] S. K. Chatterji, Origin and Development of the Bengali Language (ODBL), p. 6.

[2] D. C. Sen, History of Bengali Language and Literature (HBL and L), p. 89.

[3] ODBL, p. 67.

[4] Sukumar Sen, History of Bengali Literature (HBL), pp. 37 et seq.

[5] HBL, p. 124.

[6] HBL and L, p. 40.

[7] HBL, pp. 82 et seq.

[8] The first detailed study was made by Q. A. M. Mannan in his successful Ph.D. thesis (London) "The Emergence and Development of Dobhāsi Literature in Bengal, up to 1855 A.D.", 1964.

[9] Q. A. M. Mannan, op. cit.

[10] HBL, p. 159.

STUDY I: THE HINDU CHIEFDOM IN MIDDLE BENGALI LITERATURE

Ronald Inden

University of Chicago

1. Introduction

Between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, Bengal was ruled by a succession of imperial and regional Muslim dynasties. Throughout this period, however, a number of independent and semi-independent Hindu chiefdoms, or *zamindārs*, of varying size continued to exist at the local political level in Bengal. (There also existed a number of local Afghan chiefdoms, which I shall not discuss here.) There were certain general conditions which made the continued existence of local chiefdoms possible. Bengal was far from the center of imperial power in Delhi. But other geographical factors were perhaps more important.

The Bengal region is for the most part flat country which is flooded by the Gaṅgā and its tributaries during the monsoon season.[1] This has made the area ideally suited for paddy cultivation. Areas that are not under paddy cultivation, however, tend to be covered with thick jungle growth. For these reasons, Bengal in the period in question was an area difficult to defend -- there are few hill areas which could have been fortified and no stone for building forts. It was also an area difficult to conquer. Communications and transportation within the region, except by boat, were not easy. Conventional armies could not move quickly through soaked paddy fields, and horses and elephants were of little value in warfare there. It took the Mughals 36 years (1576-1612) to bring most of Bengal under imperial rule.[2]

Once the Mughals had extended imperial rule as far as Bengal, a problem arose. The Mughals ideally preferred to collect revenue directly from the cultivators. But because of the monsoon flooding, human habitations in Bengal have tended to be built either in lineal settlements along raised river banks or on high mounds of earth obtained by excavating banks.[3] Thus settlements have tended to be dispersed rather than nucleated; there were much larger nucleated settlements, especially in Western Bengal, but their number was comparatively small.[4] Such a settlement pattern is of course related to minimal political corporateness.[5] This relative weakness in turn favored the existence of local *rājās* who had their capitals in the larger nucleated settlements and could dominate sizable stretches of the countryside. Overcoming the obstacles of poor land transportation and the power of local *rājās* in order to deal directly with the cultivators might have proven extremely costly for the Mughals. They solved the problem by dealing with the *rājās* of the local chiefdoms instead.[6]

But these are only "passive" external factors which permitted the institution of the local chiefdom to exist as a permanent feature of the political structure of Bengal during our period, and they tell us little about political organization and activity within the chiefdom. Were there more "active" internal factors relating to political organization and activity within the chiefdom itself which from the point of view of the inhabitants living inside the chiefdom made it a permanent political institution? In other words, what was the nature of political organization and activity within the chiefdoms? I shall try to provide some answers to this question. But before asking specific questions of this type, it is necessary to answer another kind of question: What sources are there for this inquiry, and how good are they?

2. The Sources.

The records, in Persian, kept by the Mughals, form an important body of source material. An examination of these sources should yield further information, though from the Mughal point of view, about the relations of the chiefdoms with the Mughal government. A study of these sources should also provide us with valuable information on the size and revenue of the chiefdoms, and incidentally shed some light on their internal structure and organization. These sources are largely still untapped. In addition, the records of some of the chiefdoms themselves survive.[7] A study of these as well as the revenue records kept by the British after they took charge of the revenue collection in Bengal in 1765 might prove rewarding.

The sources I have used are in Bengali and are of two major types: 1) Caste and family accounts -- *Kulajīs*, *Kulakārikās*, *Vaṃśavalīs*, etc.; and 2) Sectarian literature -- *Maṅgalkāvyas*, etc. The *Kulajīs* deal primarily with the preservation of *kula*, or family prestige, of the high castes of Bengal. Since the preservation of *kula* was not directly dependent on landholding and political power, it is only occasionally that we find a *Kulajī* that provides detailed information on the political structure and activity of a chiefdom. Such a *Kulajī* is, the *Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī*, or *Genealogy of the Siṃha Clan*.[8] This genealogy relates the story of how five clans of the Uttara-raḍhi Kayasthas -- Siṃha, Ghoṣa, Dāsa, Datta, and Mitra -- were informally installed as hereditary rājās in southern Murshidābād and northern Bīrbhūm Districts by the minister of one King Ādityaśūra. The date of this event as given by the *Kulajī* is the tenth century A.D.; the probable reason for the dating is that this caste was trying to connect itself with a mythical King Ādiśūra who, many of the other high castes of Bengal claim, established them in their high position in the ninth or tenth century. Actually, the story seems roughly to refer to the period between the fifteenth and late sixteenth centuries. It ends with an interesting account of how the Mughals took away the Siṃha chiefdoms. It was probably, therefore, written in the seventeenth century. Other more typical *Kulajīs*, though not as valuable as this one, do provide some useful information on the relationship between rājā and caste during our period. Some of this material will be used in this study.

The sectarian literature in Middle or Medieval Bengali is very extensive; but I shall confine myself primarily to one text which, in varying degrees, best suits my purpose here. This is the Caṇḍīmaṅgala of Mukundarāma.

Mukundarāma finished his Caṇḍīmaṅgala sometime around 1584-90 A.D.[9] He wrote it in the chiefdom of Brāhmaṇabhūmi under the patronage of the rājā of that place, Bāṅkurā Rāya. Mukundarāma was employed there as tutor to the rājā's children after he had fled from his own village, Dāmunyā, in neighboring Bardwān District. In the Caṇḍīmaṅgala, Kālaketu, a lowly hunter by caste, turns in distress to the worship of Caṇḍī, a Bengali version of the Mother Goddess. As a boon, she bestows great wealth on him. This he uses to found his own chiefdom called "Gujarāt" on the border of a larger chiefdom called "Kaliṅga". Both of these were, so far as can be determined, fictional chiefdoms. But although we cannot accept Mukundarāma's poem as a historical account of a specific chiefdom, I do not think this subtracts from the historicity of his observations. As tutor to the rājā's family, he was a member of the rājā's court. It is probably safe to assume that what he wrote regarding the political organization and activity of his fictional chiefdoms was largely based on what he actually observed in Brāhmanabhūmi and other nearby local chiefdoms in the late sixteenth century. Mukundarāma's poem is the most valuable literary source that we possess for this period; he had a penchant for describing social and political detail, while most of his contemporaries were primarily concerned with myth and ritual.

3. The Functions of the Political Systems.

It would be a mistake to assume, as some writers have done, that most local Bengali rājās were merely intermediaries who collected revenue for the Mughals, keeping a share as their reward for making the collection, and maintaining law and order within their territories. The Dacca University History of Bengal gives a list of the important chiefdoms which existed around 1600 A.D.,[10] but it makes no attempt to give an analysis of the political systems of these chiefdoms or of the functions which they performed in Bengali society. This account treats the chiefdoms and their rājās as "enemies of Mughal peace"[11] and confines itself almost exclusively to an account of the Mughal efforts to bring local rājās under control.

T. K. Raychaudhuri in his Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir goes further than this and tries to give some description of the local chiefdom itself, relying on literary and other sources. He gives an account of the forms of revenue collected by the local rājā as depicted in the Caṇḍimangala. He also tells us that there is reason to believe that the local rājās exercised internal political autonomy, that they exercised police and judicial powers within their own territories.[12] But Raychaudhuri tends to look at the local chiefdom from a narrow, external administrative and economic point of view and hence to concentrate on the relations of the chiefdoms to the Mughal government.

Raychaudhuri does not take as harsh a view of the chiefdoms as does the *History of Bengal*, but he does emphasize the "arbitrary" and "oppressive" character of zamindārī rule. He states that, "The *zamindars*, within their territories, were free to rule as they liked: free to rule, and free to oppress."[13] Again he states that, "*zamindars* managed the revenue affairs just as they pleased",[14] and that the *zamindar* was often a "ruthless moneylender".[15] The difficulty in these characterizations is that they really tell us very little about local chiefdoms or the societies in them, and this is Raychaudhuri's basic fault. He does not attempt to analyze the *zamindārī* or local chiefdom as a political system, nor does he attempt to discover what functions such a political system performed within the society of the chiefdom.

It is this kind of analysis that I shall undertake. I shall limit myself to a brief description of the political organization of the chiefdom followed by a description of the functions performed by the *rājā* and his government in local society. I shall argue that while changes in political organization took place during the fifteenth to eighteenth century period which affected the *capacity* of the *rājā* and his government to perform certain functions, there appears to have been no basic change in the *types* of functions which were performed by the political organization within the chiefdom. I have stated that there were "external" factors which made the local chiefdom a permanent feature of the social structure of Bengal. I shall also argue that the variety of functions performed by the political organization of the chiefdom was wider than earlier writers had supposed, and that these functions comprised "internal" factors which, together with the external factors, made the local chiefdom a permanent feature in Bengali society.

a. The largest structural components which made up a chiefdom.

The chiefdom, as depicted in the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala* and other texts, consisted of three geographically bound entities: the political system, the *rājya*; the territory itself, the *deśa*; and the hierarchy of social groups, the *samāja*. All of these entities were tied together in a complex economic network. The *deśa* was a small territory which consisted of a town, a number of surrounding villages, and the intervening agricultural lands. The boundaries of the *deśa* were not always well-defined. The border areas of Kaliṅga-*deśa* were filled with jungle and swamp. This situation was probably common during this period. A single *deśa* was not always coterminous with a single chiefdom or *rājya*. Often a chiefdom included several *deśas* joined together, in which case, the political chiefs of the separate *deśas*, called *bhūñās*, became followers of the most powerful chief, who became *rājā* of the conjoined *deśas*. Kaliṅga was an example of such a chiefdom.

The lands of the *deśa* formed the economic base of the chiefdom, since settled agriculture -- paddy cultivation -- was the main source of wealth. Cultivators and related personnel lived in the villages and tilled the soil.

The economic hub of the *deśa* was the town where there was a high concentration of specialists of all kinds. Also in the town were the markets, where merchants and others engaged in trade.

All of the caste groups in the *deśa*, ranked high and low in a hierarchy, formed the *samāja* of the chiefdom. The three upper castes were the Brāhman-priests, pandits, and preservers of Hindu tradition; the Baidyas-physicians; and the Kāyasthas-officials and landholders.[16] These three caste groups were literate and were considered superior in Hindu customs and culture. They also enjoyed certain economic advantages. Beneath these were a number of specialist castes such as the Nāpit (barber), Mālākāra (garland-maker), Gandhabaṇik (grocer), Telī (oil-presser), Tāmbulī (betel-grower), Gopa (cowherd), Kumbhakāra (potter), Kāmār (blacksmith), Subarṇabaṇik (goldsmith), Tāntī (weaver), etc. Beneath these came the bulk of the populace: the Hele (cultivating) and Jele (fishing) Kaibartta, Bāgdī (foot soldier), etc.; and the untouchable castes such as the Hāḍi (laborer), Cāmār (leather-worker), and Ḍom (scavengers and sweepers).[17] All of these caste groups were linked together in a complex economic system involving exchange of goods and services between client and patron.

b. The political organization of the *rājya*.

The political system of the chiefdom, the *rājya*, consisted not of any constitutionally defined set of political institutions, but, essentially, of a *rājā* and his followers. The *rājā* and his followers were tied to each other in a network of patron-client relationships. In this system, one man within a chiefdom, the *rājā*, and not a lineage, clan, or caste, was the supreme political authority. All other political personnel in the chiefdom were his inferiors and were tied to him in some way which perhaps expressed their inferiority. For example, even the most important followers of the *rājā* had to wait personally upon him. Normally, the *rājā* inherited his position from his father. This political system might, therefore, be roughly characterized as a form of hereditary kingship.

The *rājā*, in order to perform his political functions, maintained a council or court (*sabhā*). Within the compound of the *rājā*'s house, was an audience and throne hall, the *pāṭśālā*, where the *rājā* held court with his following. The court of the Rājā of Kaliṅga is described thus:

> The Rājā of Kaliṅga was sitting holding court. To his right sat Vijaya Ghoṣāla, his domestic priest (*purohita*) and to his left was his prime minister (*mahā pātra*), Narasiṃha Dāsa. In front of him, a reader was reciting the histories. Many good *paṇḍitas* were sitting in the *rājā*'s court. They were wearing yellow robes and long forehead marks. His nine sons, six grandsons, and eighteen sisters' sons were there. Qualified men sang and played the veena. On all sides were warriors, (*rāhuta*), elephant drivers, (*māhuta*), and army chiefs (*senāpati*). Elephants, horses, and foot-soldiers

> (*pādāṭi*) stood around in groups on the perimeter. The overlord (*adhipati*) of the subordinate chiefs (*sāmanta*) was the maternal uncle of the *rājā*. Sitting in the court (*sabhā*) he heard the drum of the policeman (*koṭāla*).[18]

The above description was written by Mukundarāma around 1600. Here is a description of the court of the Rājā of Barddhamāna (Bardwan), written by Bhāratacandra around 1750:

> Vīrasiṃha sat holding court (*sabhā*). Ministers (*pātra*), allies (*mitra*) and courtiers (*sabhāsad*) sat in the court. [The *rājā* had] the royal parasol, scepter, screen (ādani), fly-whisk, and the peacock-fan. All the slaves (*golām*) stood in a crowd. Reciters (*pāṭhaka*), story-tellers (*kathaka*), poets (*kabi*), and Brāhmana (*paṇḍitas*); teachers (*adhyāpaka*) scholars (*bhaṭṭācārya*), *gurus*, and *purohitas*; five sons, four brothers, and ten brothers' sons; seven sisters' daughters' husbands and sixteen sisters' sons; sons-in-law, fathers-in-law (*behāi*), brothers-in-law, and maternal uncles: all of these agnatic and affinal kinsmen sat (together in the court) as a strong following (*dāla*).
>
> Soldiers (*sipāhi*) stood in front in rows, holding swords and shields to their chests in either hand. Timekeepers (*ghaḍiyāl*) on both sides had time-pieces in their hands. Rows of club-bearers (*copdār*) had golden maces in their hands. Inferior followers (*muśaheb*) all sat still; without a command, none of them moved his head to reply.
>
> The *munśi* [letter-writer], *bakṣi* [quarter-master and record-keeper for the troops], *Baidya* [physician], kānungoi [keeper of revenue records], and *kāji* [Muslim judge] [were tnere] as well as all the other people who had the *rājā*'s pleasure.
>
> Rebeck, tambourine, veena, and *mṛdaṅga* drums played, and dancers, proficient in classical music, sang many-hued songs. Jesters clowned about, dancers danced, and the *nakib* [announcer] in the *selām* [bowing] place showed the *selām*.
>
> Uzbek and Persian [soldiers] and Abyssinians; horsemen, wrestlers, shield-bearers, attendants, and hereditary servants (*khanejad*) [were there]. In front [of the court] riders with whips put horses through their routines. Elephant drivers [seated] on the shoulders of elephants, made them bow to the *rājā*.[19]

The court obviously provided a convenient means by which a *rājā* could make a display of his power and wealth. The audience is supposed to be impressed with the courts, and hence the power and wealth, of the *rājās*, described in the passages just quoted. In addition, and more importantly, the court was a place where the *rājā* could conduct the business of his chiefdom. The *rājā* in his court punished criminals, settled disputes, decided whether to go to war, and so on. The *rājā* came to decisions on important matters after consulting his leading followers, and it seems that in certain cases, the *rājā* could make a final decision only after he had obtained the consent of his followers in the court. When the Rājā of Kaliṅga wanted to execute Kālaketu for having established an independent chiefdom in his *deśa*, his followers disagreed and would not give their consent: "The minister and allies (*pāra-mitra*) and *purohita* reasoned with the *rājā*; no one gave consent to kill the hero."[20] The *rājā*, in theory at least, had to respect the wishes of his assembled followers unless he were willing to risk splitting them into factions or losing their support.[21]

The court was also a place where the *rājā*'s followers could come to show their support of the *rājā* and seek favors of him. Anyone who was or wished to become, a member of the *rājā*'s following would, when he came to court, present bheṭa to the *rājā* as a sign of his submission to his authority. This *bheṭa* was a gift to a superior generally consisting of uncooked foodstuffs. In return for the *bheṭa*, the *rājā* gave the person a flower and *pān*. If the person were more important than an ordinary subject, then the *rājā* would, in addition, give him a headdress, earrings, armband, etc. Giving flower and *pān* signified that the *rājā* had accepted the person as a subject in his chiefdom. Additional gifts, especially the armband, showed that the person was one of the rājā's men, authorized and privileged to carry out some activity in the *rājā*'s name.[22] Members of *rājā*'s immediate following were obliged to attend on the *rājā*'s person and act as his personal servants. In a text of the *Mayanāmati-gāna*, written in East Bengal during this period, we read that while the Rājā Gopicandra was holding court, "The subordinate princes (*āyatti kumāra*) came, bearing the royal parasol. Julāi Sekkar came, bringing pots of water. Khās Malmal came, bearing tobacco. Khetuyā Laṅkeśvara came, bearing the box of betel. Hemāi Pāttar fanned the Rājā."[23] Those who came to the court were, of course, entertained there by the *rājā*'s court dancers and musicians. They were also fed from the *rājā*'s household. The court thus provided a formal situation in which the *rājā*, in front of his followers, could build up and maintain his following through the patron-client relationship.

The *rājā* did not, obviously, have a complete monopoly of power and authority in his chiefdom. Power and authority were organized in his chiefdom in two different ways, involving two different types of followers. First, the *rājā* shared power and authority with followers who were members of a territorial hierarchy. The members of this territorial hierarchy -- *bhūñās* (subordinate chiefs), and *maṇḍalas* (village headmen) -- were semi-autonomous; each had his own independent base of power and exercised his own authority within his own territory. The essential features of this territorial hierarchy can be observed in several texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[24] The best expression that I have seen of it is in a description of the court of a Rājā Gauḍeśvara in the *Dharmamaṅgala* of Rupārāma, written in 1649.

> The fifth Gauḍeśvara had convened the court and was seated. The twelve territorial chiefs (*bāra-bhūñā*) were sitting in front of the Rājā. Nearby, face to face, in row after row,

> the seventy-two headmen (*bahattari-maṇḍala*) were sitting; [these formed] the strength of the Rājā's following.[25]

Secondly, the *rājā* delegated *power and authority* to followers who acted as officials, soldiers, etc. on his behalf. These followers derive from the *rājā* himself. Power and authority were organized thus as a result of the *rājā*'s efforts to maintain or increase his own power and authority. It seems that in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the second type of political organization began to grow at the expense of the first.

The *rājā* could rule and perform his functions within the chiefdom only if he could maintain and prevent cleavage within and among the groups in his following. Members of the *rājā*'s following often had political objectives of their own and these did not always coincide with those of the *rājā* himself. Examination of the sources from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shows that the following groups formed the most important segments of the *rājā*'s following during that period.

First in importance perhaps were the *rājā*'s own agnatic and affinal kinsmen. Even though political power and authority were possessed by a single *rājā* and not an entire lineage or clan, the *rājā*'s agnatic kin were an important political force. The position of *rājā* was normally hereditary within the lineage or clan. Although there is no clear evidence in the texts, it is likely that the rule of primogeniture was not firmly established as the principle of succession in the families of the *rājās*. This meant that brothers and collateral cousins were in direct competition with each other for political power and authority and succession to the throne. Quarrels between brothers could lead to cleavages within other segments of a *rājā*'s following when members of these groups took sides. In a *maṅgala* text from around 1650 A.D.,[26] we learn that a *rājā* had been driven from his chiefdom because a faction opposed to him had formed: "An opposing faction (*para dala*) took away the rights (*adhikāra*) of the chiefdom."[27] This faction was apparently composed of the *rājā*'s brothers, marriage relations, and officals. This *rājā* complained that, "My brothers and affinal relatives are all causing me grief," and "Those agnates and affines (*jñāti-bandhu*) have gone against *dharma* and seized my chiefdom and wealth." Elsewhere we read that, "All the officials wish to kill the *rājā*."[28]

Affinal ties as the above quotations indicate, were also important. *Rājās* were constantly trying to form new political alliances in their efforts to strengthen their followings. Perhaps the best and most permanent form of political alliance was one cemented by a marriage alliance. Hence we see that relatives by marriage were included in the list of followers present at the Rājā of Kaliṅga's court. These included the Rājā's mother's brother, who was his most powerful territorial chief.[29]

The other important segments of the *rājā*'s following during this period were the members of the territorial hierarchy, the territorial chiefs (*bhūñā*) and village headmen. The territorial chiefs were powerful during this period. They maintained their own courts, their own officials, and bodies of their own armed retainers. They thus had their own independent following. They retained internal autonomy and remained semi-autonomous within the *rājā*'s chiefdom during the first part of this period. The strategy of the *rājā* was to build up his own power and reduce that of his territorial chiefs without causing a disruption of relationships with them.

The *rājā*'s officials, servants, armed retainers, etc. -- those who were dependent on the *rājā* for the power and authority which they exercised in his name were the third most important segment of the *rājā*'s following. Because of their dependent position, these people were less of a threat to the *rājā*. However, the *rājā*'s minister could cause considerable trouble if he joined forces with the *rājā*'s enemies either inside or outside the chiefdom.

In order for a *rājā* to rule and maintain his power, he had to perform a balancing act between the different groups in his following as well as between the members of each group. Under these circumstances, it is hardly correct to say that the local *rājās* "ruled just as they liked". The *rājā*'s actions, though they may not have been limited by the "rule of law", were in effect limited by his need to maintain unity among his followers and a consensus at court.

c. *Functions of the rājā and his government*.

The primary political function which the *rājā* performed was to provide protection to his subjects from internal and external disorder. All of the texts I have examined agree on the importance of protection, but perhaps the best expression of this is in the following poem, from the early part of our period, where one villager gives this advice to the others:

> If residence and cultivation are taken up in separate places, the (*ḍāka*) poem says that the cultivator is ruined. Those who do not understand the duties of a *rājā* ruin themselves. Where a *rājā* gives protection, there residence is good. Because, in that case, I gain wealth, prosperity, and rights (*adhikāri*), I wish always to serve a *raja* so that he knows me well. As is the *rājā*, so is the country; settle in a country after you have seen what the circumstances are. It is madness to settle in a place where the homestead and cowshed are in separate places. He who does not understand the affairs of politics; him I shall not send to the court to act as spokesman.[30]

In this passage we can also see the way in which a cultivator obtains protection from a *rājā*. He does not obtain it simply by living in a territory controlled by a *rājā*. He obtains it through the patron-client relationship. The cultivator serves the *rājā* in exchange for which he obtains "wealth, prosperity and rights".

The *rājā* and his followers certainly had the power and authority to settle disputes and punish criminals. In the *Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī*, for instance, at the time of the installation of the subordinate *rājā*, Soma Ghoṣa, the minister of his overlord announces that, "Adjudication of all disputes is now to be done before him," and that, "When quarreling and disaffection break out, you (the subjects) shall not go to Gauḍa (the capital). Now you shall obey this *rājā* (*bhūpati*) as though he were the *mahārāja*!"[31]

There are not sufficient data at hand to show just how disputes were settled and crimes punished at all levels of the local political system. Probably almost all caste groups, or *samājas*, within the chiefdom had caste councils and/or headmen which settled disputes relating to caste and family affairs. Mukundarāma describes the meeting of such a caste council of a Baṇik (merchant) caste. Certainly the upper castes (Brahmaṇa, Baidya, and Kāyastha) had councils and headmen; there is evidence of this in caste records.[32]

We also discover in these records that the *rājā* in a chiefdom was the headman of his own *samāja*, as well as the head of all the *samājas* in his chiefdom taken together. Here is a passage from a genealogy of the Baṅgaja Kāyasthas in which the Rājā of Candradvīpa, a chiefdom in Bākargañj District, Eastern Bengal, as head of the Baṅgaja Kāyastha *samāja* there, gave high status to a family within that caste after putting down the objections of a member of the caste.

> Jitāmitra Nāga was full of great dharma; he was [endowed] with all virtues and very peaceful and retrained. He [made] an unprecedented gift to the Kāyasthas. His [wish for them to accept it and him]. Then the Rājā of Candradvīpa, for the purpose of [performing] a sacrifice, brought all the Kāyasthas together and honored those who possessed family prestige. Then Jitāmitra Nāga came quickly. He brought Kulīnas of the Four Families [highest ranked in the caste] and Madhyalyas [intermediate in rank], and *ghaṭakas* [genealogist-matchmakers] -- yes, everyone.
>
> Then the rājā said, in the place [where] everyone was [assembled], 'In origin, Jitāmitra Nāga is a Madhyalya.' Having heard the words of the rājā, the Kāyasthas [gave their] consent, 'With due despatch, then, make Nāga a Madhyalya.'
>
> When Vidyānanda Datta Rāya [highest ranked Madhyalya] heard of this incident, he came to the rājā's assembly [and said], 'From now on, with a sacred thread across my neck, I wear the dress of Kṣatriya.' With both hands together, Datta Rāya blessed the rājā, went to one side, and sat down. [Kāyasthas were Śūdras, not Kṣatriyas. The rājā was a Kāyastha and hence a Śūdra. As a 'new' Kṣatriya, Datta blessed the rājā, since Kṣatriyas are higher than Śūdras.]
>
> Seeing this untoward [behavior], the rājā requested, 'I see the sacred thread, which is a mark of a Kṣatriya, across your neck; speak to the point and let me hear the reason for this.' Datta said, 'What else shall I say, o rājā? You have the power to do the undoable. If Jitāmitra

> Nāga is a Madhyalya, then make me a Kṣatriya, sire.'
>
> [The rājā] was atonished at hearing all these words, and spoke quickly yet with good breeding to Datta, 'Who can make your Madhyalya family prestige disappear? Give your consent to my wish [for] Nāga Majumadār to attain the position of a Madhyalya. If I do not have the consent of everyone, what power have I? You are a Kāyastha of Vallāla, everyone recognizes that. Who else can be a Madhyalya like you?'
>
> Thus spoke the rājā to Datta Rāya. And then he spoke good advice. And afterwards all the Kāyasthas consulted together and spoke especially to Datta Rāya. And then [the rājā] had the consent of everyone to make Nāga a Madhyalya [next in rank] after Datta. Then all the Kāyasthas [before] the rājā made Jitāmitra Nāga a Madhyalya in Candradvīpa.[33]

Two points can be made about the exercise of political power in settling disputes and making decisions. First, the power and authority of individuals as members of the caste council depended on their political power and social prestige. The rājā, as the most powerful member of his caste in his chiefdom, was also the head of his caste samāja. The Kulīnas, highest in hereditary rank in the caste, seem to have had more influence than other members of the samāja. Datta Rāya, a powerful individual of highest Madhyalya, or intermediate rank, could not be ignored when he raised objections.

Second, the rājā did not have the power to act alone, against the wishes of the council. Decisions, at least in conception were corporate ones. This makes sense. Since the rājā depended on followers for support, it would have been most desirable for him to maintain the united support of his followers. The best way to do this was to arrive at decisions through the formation of a consensus.

Although the data from this period are not yet sufficient, it would probably be safe to assume that disputes which were not settled by caste councils were settled by members of the territorial hierarchy: the headman and village council; the territorial chief and his council; and the rājā and his council. It is also quite likely that disputes were settled in the same way by these bodies as they were by the caste headmen and councils, though at the same levels of the territorial chief and rājā decisions were in some cases probably made in consultation with Brāhmaṇ paṇḍitas versed on the Sāstras. We know from the texts that such paṇḍitas were maintained as members of their councils.[34]

Another political function performed by the rājā and his followers was the making of war. Local rājās and territorial chiefs had the power to fight in order to maintain or further their interests and, especially in the sixteenth century, maintained large fighting forces. The Rājā of Kaliṅga, in the Caṇḍimaṅgala, fought with Kālaketu after he learned that the latter had cleared the land and established a chiefdom in a corner of what the Rājā of Kaliṅga considered to be his own territory.[35] In the *Dharmamaṅgala*, Karṇa Sena, a territorial chief, aided by his overlord, fought a war with Soma Ghoṣa who had usurped his territory.[36] In the *Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī*, the Uttara-Rāḍhī Kāyastha territorial chiefs fought with the Mughals in order to preserve their position.[37] It seems clear that in most cases the Mughals seriously diminished the ability of the local *rājās* to make war.[38] But there is evidence in Bhāratacandra that even in the later period, *rājās* maintained fairly large bodies of armed retainers.[39]

The local Hindu *rājā* performed a number of economic functions within his chiefdom. The most important of these was, of course, the collection of revenue, because out of it he maintained his court and remunerated his followers. A number of questions about the external aspects of the revenue system of the local Hindu chiefdom can be asked. What were the sources and forms of the *rājā*'s revenue? What percentage of the total produce of the chiefdom was taken as revenue? How much did the local *rājā* pay in revenue to the regional Mughal ruling authority? Did changes in the local revenue systems occur through time? I shall not attempt to answer any of these questions fully, but will summarize some of the main features of the local revenue systems, and outline some of the changes which appear to have occurred in them.

The economy of Mughal India, like the economy of the local Bengali Hindu chiefdoms, was primarily agricultural. Agricultural production was, hence, the primary source of revenue. In general, in other parts of India, the Mughals obtained revenue by taking a share of the produce, usually set at one-third to one-half of the total produce.[40] The actual amount taken was assessed by measuring the land.[41] It was collected by an elaborate bureaucracy of revenue officials. There is some evidence, however, that in the *zamindārī* areas of Bengal this was not the case. There, it appears, the *zamindārs* made a fixed annual "payment". The amount to be paid was agreed upon by the *zamindārs* and the Mughal government. It was not, apparently, determined by measurement.[42]

The revenue system at least of some local Hindu chiefdoms differed considerably from the Mughal revenue system during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Let us look at the literary evidence. In the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala*, after a flood in Kaliṅga, a body of villagers decides to go and settle in Kālaketu's newly established chiefdom. Bulān Maṇḍal, the village headman, acts as spokesman for the villagers and asks Kālaketu what the terms of settlement will be. This is Kālaketu's reply:

> 'Listen brother Bulān Maṇḍal, come to my town. I will put your grief at a distance. I shall give you gold earrings for your ears. Settle in my town, cultivate as much [land] as you wish, and give me taxes (*kara*) after three years have passed; you shall [then] give me a rupee (*ṭaṅkā*) for each plough. No one need fear anything because you shall all hold my mark on leases (*paṭṭā*).
>
> You shall give one-and-one-half cowries after settling here; it will not increase. I shall not place *ḍihidārs* [local

> officials] in the country. Nor shall I collect in Gujarāṭ all of the cowries taken in the form of *bābs* [occasional payments or cesses] such as *selāmi* [gifts made to the *rājā* on certain occasions], and *baṃśbāḍi* [payments made when a new house is erected]. I will not collect all the *pārvaṇis* [payments made on the occasion of a *pūjā* festival] and *pañcakās* [probably quit-rent paid by those who held service tenures]; nor the cesses on brown sugar, salt and thread; nor the *dhānakāṭi* [payment made when rice paddy was harvested] or the *kalam-kaśur* [paid for errors made in the records]. I shall not accept gifts for the paddy which you sell in the market, nor will I increase the number of taxes to be paid in my town.'[43]

From this passage we can see that apparently the main tax collected by the *rājā* in fictional Gujarāṭ was not a share of the produce, but rather a plough tax. It is clear that the revenue from the plough tax was also supplemented by a number of taxes which I shall call "occasional payments" for lack of a better term. That these taxes were not collected by a bureaucracy of revenue officials is indicated by the fact that Kālaketu agrees not to appoint *ḍihidārs* to do so. It is curious, however, that he should expressly state that he will not do this, and this will be examined later.

In a text of the *Māṇika-candra-gāna* which may be ascribed to this period, Mukundarāma's evidence is confirmed:

> In Vaṅga, Māṇikacandra Rājā was very good. He realized a monthly payment of thirty cowries for each plough. The people supplied (*yogāy*) a revenue (*khājanā*) of thirty cowries. On the day of Aṣṭami *pūjā* he accepted one goat [from each of them]. Those who sold thatching straw and supplied a load of it [to the Rājā], in exchange, enjoyed protection for six months. Those who sold plaintain leaves and supplied a bundle of them [to the Rājā], in exchange, enjoyed protection for six months.[44]

Both of these passages describe a revenue system in which the main source of revenue was a plough tax. This was supplemented by other payments in cowries and goods. The system is also notable because officials seem to be absent. It is possible that in this system subjects including the village headmen and territorial chiefs, brought their "taxes" to the *rājā*'s court on important occasions such as Kālī-pūjā. This was at least the case in Barabhūma, a tribal chiefdom on the western border of Bengal, in later times.[45]

If this type of local revenue system was found in some parts of Bengal during this period, it also seems to have been disappearing. In both of the stories where we find evidence of this system, we also discover that it was significantly changed. In the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala*, one Bhāṃḍu Datta, an unscrupulous Kāyastha, and probably the greatest rogue in Middle Bengali literature, comes to Kālaketu after he has concluded an agreement with Būlan Maṇḍal and convinces Kālaketu to hire him as his "minister" (*pātra*). This is what Bhāṃḍu agreed to do if Kālaketu hired him:

> 'In detail, I will give you a report one by one on the subjects who are settled here. You will give me an armband, [show me] respect, and give me a loan of bullocks and rice. I shall settle many subjects (*prajā*) here. What fear is there to speak properly? Overcoming the illusion [caused by] your subjects, you will measure out the land and give it to them, so that subjects obtain it in plots. When the crops are ripe, severe quarreling will break out. I shall block the rise of the poor; after the subjects eat your wealth, they do not flee. In this way, in the long run, you will have no trouble.'[46]

Note the reference here to measurement of land.

The same sequence of events is to be found in the *Māṇika-candra-gāna*. The idyllic conditions which had obtained in Rājā Māṇikacandra's country were interrupted when,

> From the south came a very tall Bāṅgāl [who was appointed as minister by the Rājā]; that Bāṅgāl came and took the cowries of the country. The revenue had been thirty cowries; he took sixty. He caused ploughs, yokes, ploughshares and infant children to be sold in order to squeeze out the revenue. The sorrowful poor and widows became wretched. One by one, the *tāluks* were overrun with jungle.[47]

After this minister came, he apparently began to collect a share of the produce. We read that in the Rājā's court, "The *bhandāri* [steward] gave the accounts of the chiefdom, and filled the Rājā's *kāchāri* [court] with baskets of grain."[48]

In exchange for performing his services, Bhāṃḍu Datta in the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala*, wished to be rewarded with the symbols of authority and prestige which would make him second in political status only to the Rājā. Bhāṃḍu said to Kālaketu, "Give me full responsibility [and with it] the first armlet, bracelet, and necklace ...", and, "I am the minister, you are the Rājā; I shall obtain respect before the others [obtain theirs]".[49] In more practical terms, Bhāṃḍu told Rājā Kālaketu,

> 'You will supply me with paddy, and I will not pay any interest on it. Uncle, you shall supply me with ploughs and bullocks, as well as seeds. You shall give winnowing fans and rice-husking pedals so that I can mill the rice for eating.'[50]

In another passage we learn that Bhāṃḍu obtained from the Rājā a tax-free service homestead (*inām bāḍi*);[51] he also claimed the right to a certain amount of produce from the merchants at the Rājā's market, called "*tolā*" (lit., a "lift"), but this right was denied him by the Rājā.[52] The form which Bhāṃḍu's remuneration took, together with reference to measurement, makes it clear that he was to collect a share of the produce determined by measurement. The emphasis on equipment needed to grow and process paddy seems to indicate that part of the minister's remuneration would come from rice which he had grown, collected, or processed, above and beyond the Rājā's share.

We do not have to seek far for the sources of these innovations in the local revenue systems. The Mughal government itself was the source. Mukundarāma provides clear evidence of this in a passage where he describes the havoc wrought by the appearance of the Mughal administration in his native village:

> In the town of Silimābād there ruled a good man; the *niyogī* [local, minor landholder] Gopīnātha lived in his *tāluk* [small scale zamindārī]. We farmed in Dāmunyā, and had been settled there for six or seven generations.
>
> The prosperous Mānsiṅgh, a bee at the lotus-feet of Viṣṇu, was the governor of Gauḍa, Vaṅga, and Utkal. During the time of Mānsiṅgh, as a result of the faultiness of his subjects, there came into being a *ḍihidār* [local official], Māmud Sarip. The *vazir* [revenue official] was Rāyazādā. He drove away the merchants and became the enemy of the Brāhmaṇs and Vaiṣṇavas. Stretching a rope from corner to corner, he measured fifteen *kaṭhas* as one *kuḍa* (Actually twenty *kāṭhās* made up a *kuḍā*, this being the same as a *bighā*, or one-third of an acre.).[53] He did not hear the wailing of his subjects. The administration (sarkār) became black; it recorded waste land as fertile, and 'ate dhotis' [i.e., took bribes?] without giving anything in return. The money-changers (*paddār*) came as Yama [the god of death]; the rupee (*ṭaka*) was reduced [in value] by two-and-one-half annas, and every day they took a profit.
>
> The *ḍihidār*, the stupid eunuch!; if one did not give him a cowry every day, no one could buy paddy or cattle. In this upheaval, the lord Gopīnātha Nandī was imprisoned. On account of this there was no way out. The *peyādās* [foot troops], lest the subjects flee, barred the gates and placed guards near them all. The subjects became distressed; they sold their household ploughs, and goods worth one rupee they sold for ten annas.[53]

There are several interesting and puzzling points in this passage which could be discussed at length. I wish here to make only one. Mukundarāma knew that there were two types of local revenue systems, the one involving the plough tax, and the other involving a share of the produce. In his account he shows us how Kālaketu switched from one system to the other. Mukundarāma knew that the source of the latter system was the Mughal administration; that is why he had Kālaketu agree not to appoint those helpful local officials, the *ḍihidārs*, in his chiefdom. This suggests that both types of local revenue systems existed in his time, though local *rājās*, under the Mughal influence, were changing from the former to the latter. Mukundarāma did not approve of this "administrative reform"; in his eyes it led to a disruption of rural relationships and oppression of the local population. From another point of view, however, one could say that the new system was more "efficient", and enabled local *rājās* to obtain more revenue from their subjects.

The third element in the Mughal revenue system was a bureaucracy of revenue officials. We have seen that local *rājās* began to appoint ministers to collect the new form of revenue; but can we say that bureaucracies of local officials had developed in local chiefdoms during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? Let us look at the evidence.

One of the difficulties involved here is that, assuming the existence of a bureaucracy, we would expect it to vary in size and complexity in some kind of direct relationship to the size of the chiefdom involved. The smaller a chiefdom was, for instance, the smaller and simpler would have been the local bureaucracy. We do not know, of course, what the size of the fictional chiefdom of Gujarāṭ was. Mukundarāma gives the impression that it was not very large. So perhaps we can assume that if there were a bureaucracy, it was small.

A careful search through the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala* yields no bureaucracy of officials, large or small. It is true that Bhāṇḍu Datta collected a share of the produce and in some way measured the land. There is also evidence in the text that he was literate and kept records. But there is now evidence that Bhāṇḍu employed a staff of subordinate officials to assist him. The evidence suggests that Bhāṇḍu Datta effected the revenue collection through and with the assistance of the already existing village headmen, or *maṇḍalas*. In one passage, Bhaṇḍu tells Kālaketu that, "The son of Deoyan Bhet, whom you call Bulān Maṇḍal [the village headman], used to carry my records [before everyone left Kaliṅga]. He understands and will perform his task so that I will not be embarrassed."54

It is conceivable that in some local chiefdoms during this period, ministers were assisted by *ḍihidārs*, those local officials referred to earlier. As Mukundarāma indicates, local *rājās* certainly knew about these *ḍihidārs* and the functions they performed. But in Gujarāṭ, at least, the Rājā did not appoint them, even after he had hired a minister. Actually the rather simple means of collecting the revenue adopted in Gujarāṭ is what we might expect in a small chiefdom in this period, when local *rājās* were in the process of changing over to the new type of revenue system.

The introduction of a minister into the political organization in this way seems to have upset relationships in the older territorial hierarchy. Though it is nowhere openly stated, we can infer that the attempt of the *rājā* was to by-pass the territorial chiefs and collect the revenue from the cultivators through a minister and a headman. This of course would have had the effect of weakening the position of the territorial chiefs and partially converting the headmen into agents of the *rājā* -- a role which might not always have been consistent with that of spokesman for the villagers.

In the *Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī* of the seventeenth century, we find a different, but equally simple picture of local officialdom. Siṃhapur, a chiefdom described in this text, was divided into twenty territorial units, called *ḍihis*. Each *ḍihi* was said to contain twenty villages. We might say, then, that this was a chiefdom of moderate size, containing in total about 400 villages. In a passage from this text there is a description of the personnel in the political system of the chiefdom.

> All the chief persons of 400 villages: the headmen (*maṇḍalas*), foot soldiers (*pāiks*), *paṭwāris* [village accountants and revenue collectors], and border guards (*sīmān dārāns*); all went with pleasure near the Rājā.[55]

In this and other passages from the text we discover that, unlike Gujarāṭ, the chiefdoms in Murshidābād District included local revenue officials in their political organization but that the *rājās* of these chiefdoms did not employ ministers. Nor do there appear to have been any *ḍihidārs*, though the Murshidābād chiefdoms were divided into *ḍihis*. Who then directed the revenue collections? From another passage, it is possible to infer that the *rājās* themselves did it. We read that, "He [the Rājā] ruled in highest happiness and travelled from *ḍihi* to *ḍihi* to see services [performed for the gods], etc.",[56] that "the Rājā saw these and travelled from village to village," and finally that, "He had many *kachari* houses [audience halls where he could transact revenue business] everywhere."[57]

From these passages it is clear that changes were taking place in local revenue systems at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries. First, the local *rājās* began to collect revenue on the same basis as prescribed by Mughal theory; i.e., they began to take a share of the produce based on land measurement. There was a good economic reason for the *rājās* to adopt this method. It was more efficient and yielded them a larger revenue than they had been able to collect before.

Second, local *rājās* began to develop bodies of officials, who like their Mughal counterparts, organized and executed the collection of the new and higher revenue demanded from the *rājā*'s subjects. These officials were arranged in a simple hierarchy. They used writing and kept records, and among them some differentiation and specialization of tasks took place.

The development of this economic function of the local *rājā* and his government had important effects on the local political system itself. The transformation of the local revenue system simultaneously provided the local *rājā* with more wealth and political power than he had possessed before. It also strengthened his position vis-a-vis that of the other semi-autonomous members of the local territorial hierarchy, the territorial chiefs and village headmen. The minister and other officials did not have strong and independent followings and independent sources of income as did the older territorial chiefs and headmen. All of the members of the territorial hierarchy, from the *rājā* downwards, competed with each other for power in the same terms. But the officials could not compete with the *rājā* on the same terms because they depended on the *rājā* for their power, authority, and income.

The minister of course, did have power and influence within the chiefdom, but its basis was different. His power and influence depended on his ability to play territorial chiefs, headmen, subjects, and *rājās* off against one another. This ability depended more on the possession of a cunning, devious mind, smooth speech, and a sharp tongue than it did on the possession of a strong body of followers. Bhāṃḍu Datta almost succeeded in this kind of political maneuvering before the parties involved found him out.[58] On the whole, though, the minister and officials extended the *rājā*'s power and provided him with a political device which he could use against the members of the territorial hierarchy.

Earlier it was stated that political organization in the chiefdom was of two types. The first type was represented by the territorial hierarchy in which power and authority were shared by a number of semi-autonomous political leaders at various levels. The second type was represented by the *rājā*'s officials, servants, armed retainers, and other dependents, and in this type, power and authority were delegated from above. It now seems that changes in the local *rājā*'s revenue system gave the *rājā* more wealth and led to the development of a hierarchy of officials. Thus, the development of the *rājā*'s most important economic function -- revenue collection -- also led to a shift of power within the local political system from the former type of political organization to the latter. Power within the local political system was becoming more centralized.

The *rājā* and his followers performed other functions than the collection of revenue. The revenue that was collected by the *rājā* and his followers was accumulated and concentrated in the *rājā*'s capital. This concentration enabled the *rājā* and his followers to patronize a large number of specialists who were concentrated in the *rājā*'s town, which was the center of consumption. Mukundarāma tells us that potters, weavers, carpenters, jewellers, gold and spice merchants, garland-makers, confectioners, physicians, conch dealers, and other caste specialists were all settled in Gujarāṭ, the capital of Kālaketu's chiefdom.[59]

Essential to the complex and specialized economic activities which were carried out in the *rājā*'s town was the *rājā*'s market. Kālaketu, after building the town of Gujarāṭ, established his market:

> After fixing his flagstaff and tying it with a garland of wildflowers, the hero brought marketmen (*hāṭuyā*) and gave them armbands ... Many people came when they heard of the *rājā*'s market. Some sell oil and some sell portions of curds. They sell foodstuffs, goods, and gifts for presentation [to the *rājā*] of many kinds.[60]

The *rājā* and his followers, by centralizing the surplus of the cultivators in the capital, helped to make possible the establishment and growth of a relatively complex economy. This was centered in the capital where a wide range of goods were bought and sold by different caste specialists.

The *rājā* also had the wealth and power to organize the clearing of jungles, the building of dwellings and embankments, and the settlement of subjects. In the *Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī*, we see this:

> The *rājā* gave Banamāli Siṃha a lot of land. He cut down forests and settled in Kāndigrām. The residence of the Siṃha Rājās had been in Siṃhapura. The house broke in the Gaṅga, so they settled at Kāndī. He made arrangements for the service of the gods in Kāndī, Jāmuyā, and Bāgḍāṅga. Opening many villages, he settled subjects there ... Everyone calls him the 'forest-cutting' Rājā. He dug a moat and excavated a large tank; and settled Brāhmaṇas, Baidyas and Kāyasthas.[61]

The *rājā* performed religious functions within the chiefdom. He built temples and supported the performance of religious worship (*pūjā*) by giving grants of tax-free land:

> Dakṣiṇākālī [an aspect of the mother goddess] gave him [Banamāli Siṃha, the Rājā] a dream in the Dohāliyā cane thicket. Seeing the dream, he cut down the cane and found in the mud Dakṣiṇākālī, whom he established afterwards. He built a temple and installed royal service there. He settled Brāhmaṇas, Devalas [temple priests], and the twice-born there. He installed service [to the goddess] after making a gift of many lands. Many attendants (*paricaryya*) performed the services. He established a daily feast there of ten sers [about twenty pounds] of husked rice. Brāhmaṇas and Devalas feasted on the *prasād* ["favor" or "grace" of the deity in the form of food].[62]

It is quite clear that local *rājās* performed the function of patronizing religious worship. But the *rājā*'s support did more than maintain religious activities; the *maṅgala* literature considered it necessary for the propagation and spread of the worship of particular deities as well. The major objective of a deity in a *maṅgala* is to win the *rājā* over to his side. Having done so, the *rājā*'s subjects will then also worship that deity. In the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala*, for instance, Caṇḍī wins over the Rājā of Kaliṅga in a dream, and:

> The Rājā, having seen the auspicious dream, became happy, and made a proclamation with musical instruments: 'In Kaliṅga Town, in every household you shall worship the goddess whose eyes are three (Caṇḍī).'[63]

Probably every Hindu household in a chiefdom performed *pūjā* rituals of one kind or another, in order to obtain material prosperity and spiritual welfare for itself. But the *pūjās* which the *raja* and his household performed took on a special significance for the entire chiefdom as well. It seems to have been generally conceived in this period that the welfare of the chiefdom depended on the welfare of the *rājā*: "As is the *rājā*, so is the country." This statement from the Ḍāka poem which was cited earlier typifies, I think, the general attitude which the texts have in this connection. Now, how did the *rājā* obtain welfare? He obtained it, according to our texts, by worshipping a deity. Caṇḍī, in a dream, tells the Rājā of Kaliṅga that he will gain by worshipping her:

> 'Listen, o Rājā of Kaliṅga. I am born from the body of Dakṣa; I broke his sacrifice. I have not come to earth for a long time. I have come to Bhārata-varṣa to give you advice, and to receive your *pūjā* before [others]. I shall lay waste your enemies and cause your lineage to be increased. I shall make you a king before men. Being compassionate towards you, I shall make you victorious in battle; and you shall protect the earth as paramount sovereign (*ekachatra*). I shall increase your fame and make the earth [your] strength. I shall make you a crest-jewel among kings. Desirous of *kusuma* flowers and water, I shall build my own temple [here] on the banks of the Kamsa River. You, together with your subjects, ministers and *purohita* shall carefully perform [my] *pūjā*.'[64]

Mukundarāma gives us a description of the *pūjā* ceremony performed by the Rājā of Kaliṅga:

> Having bathed in the morning, he gave gifts to the Brāhmaṇas, and gave a horse and elephant to the *bhaṭṭa* [scholar or bard]. With a necklace of beads around his neck, and after filling plates with flowers, he worshipped her with both gold and water. His mind happy, the Rājā worshipped while the Brāhmaṇas chanted the Vedas. The conch shell, bells, *dampha* drum, *khamaka*, *gajajhampa*, tabor and horn sounds .... His minister and *purohita* and many agnatic and affinal kinsmen; his sons, daughters and household members, gave great amounts of solid molasses, honey, and curds, and various kinds [of foodstuffs]. They gave load after load as an offering to the goddess.
>
> At the end of the *pūjā*, he brought a buffalo and goats and gave them as a sacrificial offering. Blood flowed in streams around the four foundation walls of the temple. Cāmuṇḍā [the goddess] drank that blood. On a Tuesday which was the eighth lunar day, the Rājā, full of merit performed *pūjā* with sixteen sacrificial materials. He sacrificed hundreds of buffaloes, goats, sheep, deer and geese.
>
> The Rājā performed *pūjā* to Caṇḍī with an oblation of lotus flowers in his hands which were placed together. The Rājā circumambulated [the goddess], bowed and eulogized her.[65]

By the performance of this elaborate ritual, the *rājā* obtained his welfare and the welfare of his household. It was considered that the fortune of the *rājā*'s subjects was directly linked with the *rājā*; thus, when the *rājā* obtained welfare in this way, so too did his subjects: the *rājā* had a direct ritual link with them. This ritual link between deity, *rājā*, and subject is shown in the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala* at the time of disaster. When the chiefdom of Kaliṅga was flooded by rivers, the Rājā asked the Brāhmaṇas for help:

> The twice-born told the Rājā, 'Listen, honored Rājā, whose mind is great, carefully make a plea for help. Looking at all this water, it seems to us that Indra has become spiteful. Having seen your faults, some god has become angry. The

> place of your people (*janapada*) has become ruined. Make an offering of gold to show your respect for the gods, and your fortune will improve.' After he had heard the speech of the twice-born, the Rājā deliberated and gave an offering of gold to the waters. After the rivers had obtained their due respect, they went back to their own place. The Rājā saw this and was surprised. Slowly the waters receded. He saw everything was returned to normal and gave much wealth to the twice-born.[66]

The rājā is cast in the role of performing a specific ritual function for the benefit of his chiefdom.

The *rājā*'s *purohita*, or domestic priest, was the specialist who executed the elaborate *pūjā* of the *rājā*. It is no surprise, therefore, that he held an important position in the political system of the chiefdom. We are also told in the *Caṇḍīmaṅgala* that it was his duty to, ".... meditate constantly on the prosperity of everyone; no others perform this duty."[67] He stood next to the *rājā* in court and even accompanied him when he went off to battle.[68]

4. *Conclusion*

Even from such imperfect sources as a picture of the local Hindu chiefdom a complex political system emerges. The political system of the chiefdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries can be conceptualized in different but related ways. At the simplest and most general level, we can say that it consisted of groups of leaders and followers. These leaders and followers were tied to each other in patron-client relationships. The most powerful leader and patron in the chiefdom was the local *rājā*, and in a sense, all of his subjects were his clients. He provided them with protection and a number of other services, while they paid the revenue and provided loyal support.

More specifically, however, there were within a chiefdom, many groups of leaders and followers, patrons and clients, which were tied to each other and to the *rājā*. Villagers were tied to headmen, headmen to territorial chiefs, and territorial chiefs to the *rājā*. In addition, bodies of officials and armed retainers, as well as the *rājā*'s kindsmen, were tied to the *rājā*.

These groups also formed hierarchies. Villagers, headmen and chiefs formed a territorial hierarchy and in this period seem to have been semi-autonomous. Officials and armed retainers were also arranged in simple hierarchies. The village headman seems to have formed the base of both the territorial and official hierarchies, but apparently he was not a member of the *rājā*'s military hierarchy.

The head of the political system, the *rājā*, did not have absolute power. His power was shared with members of the territorial hierarchy and delegated to officials and armed retainers. I have inferred from the texts that these political groups jockeyed and vied with each other for position. The rājā could maintain or increase his power by playing these groups off against each other. His political actions, while they could be "arbitrary" in some instances, were limited by the necessity of maintaining at least a minimal degree of consensus and unity among his followers.

Through the patron-client relationship, the rājā and other members of the political organization performed a wide range of political, economic, and religious functions within local society. The rājā provided protection for his subjects: he settled caste and other disputes, punished criminals, and maintained a fighting force. He and his followers organized the colonization and settlement of new land, patronized the goods and services of the artisan and service castes, and established a rājā's market. The rājā also patronized religious and cultural activities within the chiefdom, fed guests and Brāhmaṇas, and doled out charity to the poor. He obtained "welfare" and "prosperity" for himself and his subjects by performing elaborate pūjā ceremonies. The local Hindu chiefdom was not, therfore, just a creation of external factors, its political organization played an important internal role in shaping and maintaining local Hindu society. For both of these reasons, the local Hindu chiefdom was a permanent feature of the social structure of Bengal.

Other writers have tended to overlook or simplify the multiplicity of functions or "services" which the rājā and his followers performed in local society. On the other hand, I would be equally wrong if I were to over-emphasize these and by implication characterize the chiefdom as a kind of pre-modern "welfare state". It certainly was not. It is unlikely that all local rājās performed all of the functions which I have enumerated. Nor is it likely that all rājās performed effectively all of the functions which they were expected to perform. In any case, these functions or services were not performed gratis. They were performed through the patron-client relationship, and the rājā expected and obtained a great deal in exchange.

For in exchange for his services, the rājā collected the revenue. It is not possible, using Middle Bengali sources, to estimate what percentage of the total produce of the chiefdom was taken by the rājā and his followers. But it does seem fairly clear, even in these sources, that during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, under the influence of the Mughals, important changes were taking place in local revenue systems. A new and more efficient type of revenue and a more efficient means of collecting it were being adopted by local rājās. As a result, it seems that local rājās were becoming wealthier and more powerful than they had been before. On the whole, it would be safe to assume that the rājā and his followers gained more through the patron-client relationship than they gave.

NOTES

[1] O. H. K. Spate, *India and Pakistan; a General and Regional Geography* (London: Metheun, 1954), p. 522.

[2] *The History of Bengal, Volume II, Muslim Period, 1200-1757*, ed. Jadu-nath Sarkar (Dacca: University of Dacca, 1948), pp. 245-246.

[3] Spate, p. 540.

[4] Spate, pp. 538-539.

[5] *Census of India, 1921, Volume V, Bengal, Part I, Report*, by W. H. Thompson (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1923), pp. 124-126.

[6] Tapankumar Raychaudhuri, *Bengal under Akbar and Jahangir; an Introductory Study in Social History* (Calcutta: A. Mukherjee, 1953), pp. 20-21.

[7] Raychaudhuri, p. 50.

[8] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", reproduced in Nāgendranāth Vasu, *Vaṅger Jātiya Itihāsa, Uttararāḍhiya Kāyastha-kaṇḍa, Section I* (Calcutta: Viśvanāth Basu, Viśvakoṣa Press, 1335 B.E. 1928-29 A.D.), pp. 14-17, 18-19, 20, 29-33, 34-35, 71, 73, 74.

[9] Mukundarāma, *Kavikaṅkana-Caṇḍī, Prathama Bhāga (Part I)*, ed. Śrīkumār Bandyopādhyāy and Viśvapati Chaudhuri. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1962. For a discussion of the date, etc. see Sukumār Sen, *Bāṅgālā Sāhityer Itihāsa, Prathama Khaṇḍa, Purvārdha* (Calcutta: Eastern Publishers, 1959), pp. 522-523.

[10] *History of Bengal, Volume II*, pp. 234-241.

[11] *History of Bengal, Volume II*, pp. 225.

[12] Raychaudhuri, pp. 21-22.

[13] Raychaudhuri, p. 42.

[14] Raychaudhuri, p. 32.

[15] Raychaudhuri, p. 33.

[16] Mukundarāma, p. 29.

[17] Mukundarāma, pp. 347-361.

[18] Mukundarāma, pp. 411-412.

[19] Bhāratacandra, "Annadāmaṅgala", Granthābalī, ed. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Sajanikānta Dās (Calcutta: Baṅgiya-Sāhitya Parisad, 19--), p. 101.

[20] Mukundarāma, p. 415.

[21] Mukundarāma, p. 337.

[22] Mukundarāma, pp. 341-433.

[23] "Mayanamati-gāna", Vaṅga Sāhitya Parichaya or Selections from the Bengali Literature, ed. Dinesh Chandra Sen (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1914), Vol. I, p. 97.

[24] For example, see Mukundarāma, pp. 336-337, 411-412, 433,444.

[25] Ruparāma Cakravarti, Dharmamaṅgala (Calcutta: Basumati Sāhitya Mandir, 19--), p. 101.

[26] Bhavāniprasāda Kara, "Caṇḍī-kāvya", Vaṅga Sāhitya Parichaya, Vol, I, pp. 302-305.

[27] Bhavāniprasāda Kara, p. 303.

[28] Bhavāniprasāda Kara. pp. 303-304.

[29] Mukundarāma, p. 412.

[30] "Ḍāker Vācana", Vaṅga Sāhitya Parichaya, Vol I. pp. 5-6.

[31] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 18.

[32] For example, see Vacaspati, "Kulasarvvasva", N. N. Vasu, Vaṅger Jātiya Itihāsa, Dakṣinarāḍhiya Kāyastha-kāṇḍa, Part I, p. 115.

[33] Cuḍāmaṇī, Baṅgaja-kāyastha-kula-karikā (MS in the Dacca University Library, uncatalogued), f. 15.

[34] Ruparāma, p. 28.

[35] Mukundarāma, pp. 371, 380-382.

[36] Ruparāma, pp. 33-38.

[37] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 74.

[38] Raychaudhuri, p. 18.

[39] Bhāratacandra, pp. 17-18.

[40] Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1556-1707* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963), pp. 190-196.

[41] Habib, pp. 198-200.

[42] Habib, p. 177.

[43] Mukundarāma, pp. 334-335.
Irfan Habib, *quṣūr* has also the sense of additional burden, prerequisite. Thus *qalam-quṣūr* may also mean the record-keeper's fee.

[44] "Mānikacandra-gāna" *Vaṅga Sāhitya Parichaya*, Vol I. p. 28.

[45] Surajit Sinha, "State Formation and Rajput Myth in Tribal Central India", *Man In India*, Vol. XLII (1962), 35-80.

[46] Mukundarāma, pp. 340-342.

[47] "Mānikacandra-gāna", p. 29, and "Mayanamati-gāna", p. 96.

[48] "Mayanamati-gāna", p. 97.

[49] Mukundarāma, pp. 341, 339.

[50] Mukundarāma, pp. 339.

[51] Mukundarāma, p. 442.

[52] Mukundarāma, pp. 363, 366.

[53] Mukundarāma, pp. 29-30.
Irfan Habib remarks that, "the rupee was reduced ...", probably refers to discount on coins when being paid into the treasury. The use of the word *ānā* in the sixteenth century would be significant.

[54] Mukundarāma, p. 342.

[55] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 16.

[56] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 71.

[57] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 71.

[58] Mukundarāma, pp. 365-369, 369-371, 438-444.

[59] Mukundarāma, pp. 347-361.

[60] Mukundarāma, p. 362.

[61] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 71.

[62] "Siṃha-vaṃśāvalī", p. 71.

[63] Mukundarāma, p. 127.

[64] Mukundarāma, p. 125.

[65] Mukundarāma, pp. 127-129.

[66] Mukundarāma, pp. 330-331.

[67] Mukundarāma, p. 133.

[68] Mukundarāma, pp. 383,411.

STUDY II: TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNTS FROM MIDDLE BENGALI LITERATURE*

G. Wayne Kilpatrick

Western Michigan University

Autobiography is obviously a branch of literature which often makes contributions to the understanding of social values. Studies of literature to augment the understanding of society are often restricted by either a lack of specific focus or by the choice of an extremely limited aspect of social history viewed by the writer in isolation from other social forces around him. Some methodological suggestions relating to the problems of studying autobiography in the context of social history are discussed below. Two autobiographical accounts from middle Bengali literature are discussed in relation to their place in literature and culture and are used to exemplify an approach to the study of autobiography as social history. Translations of the texts themselves are presented as the primary data for study. The contributions of the two authors of the texts to the understanding of the social history of their periods are discussed as well. The final notes from the viewpoint of literary criticism present both authors in the context of their general cultural milieu and many of the remarks have reference to general stylistic features of their epic compositions.

1. Autobiography in the Context of Social History

Reconstruction of aspects of social history solely from the types of characters delineated in "fiction" or other culturally defined genres in that literature alone is at best a somewhat speculative activity. An author's autobiographical account which generally provides information concerning family, education and practical experience may be a more dependable source of social information concerning the writer's milieu than his work itself. Certainly, a researcher, armed with a theoretical point of view concerning the social organization of a society as well as with social data extrapolated from its literature would be well-advised to consult any autobiographical data provided by the culture's significant literary figures. The applications of three principles, viz. the choice of a flexible theoretical point of view, the collection of social data from a body of writings, and the correlation of the two preceding principles with the specific circumstances and outlooks of the writers of that literature as made available through their self-descriptions, would at least provide contours for more definable research in the area of social history in the context of literature.

At the very least, autobiographies can provide a frame of reference for further study.

Autobiographical accounts of Bengali literary figures provide us with an important avenue of research into the social history of Bengali-speaking peoples. In the absence of clearly delineated historical documents to reveal the organization and interactions of Bengali society during many periods or in the various strata during most periods, scholars are called upon to extract social data in whatever way they can from the surviving artifacts and manuscripts of past ages if they wish to describe the earlier stages of the Bengali *societies* with any degree of accuracy or approximation to past social reality. The procedure outlined above would appear applicable to the reconstruction of the social history of the middle period of Bengali literature.

2. The Texts: Description, Methodology, and Problems

The legends which constitute the *Dharmamaṅgal* literature have been termed "the national epic of Rāṛh," a region comprised of the larger part of modern west Bengal. The epic is a vividly detailed exposition of the complex *deus ex machina* through which the worship of a male deity, Dharma Ṭhākur finally emerges victorious in struggle against the Śakti for some of the devotional respects of the Bengali people. This elaborate unfolding of divine destiny is set in the folk-culture of rural Bengal during a time specified by the texts as coterminous with the reign of Mohī-Pāla II (the late 11th century) or shortly thereafter. There is not yet adequate evidence to affirm or deny this contention. Undoubtedly to some extent the historical span covered by these texts is the period of the authors' own lives.

The autobiographies form the early portions of the *Dharmamaṅgal* texts of the authors Ruprām Chakrabartī and Mānik Rām Gāṅguli. They are probably historically reliable. The bulk of these fascinating texts is, in each case, a single version of a series of manuscripts attributed to a single author from the evidence in signature lines. Actually, these *maṅgals* and the rest of their genre constitute oral traditions reduced to writing by a tale-teller or singer. It may be assumed that they have undergone considerable modification not only at the hands of their composers but also at the hands of scribes by the way of emendation, elaboration, exaggeration, and mistakes in copying.

The text of Ruprām Chakrabartī may be dated 1649 A.D. from the evidence of a chronogram which follows the portion of his text presented below. Ruprām was a native of Śrīrāmpur, a village in Southwestern Bengal, the same region from which Mānik Rām Gāṅguli came a century later. Mānik Rām's text can be dated to 1781 A.D. by interpretation of a chronogram. His home was in a village named Belḍihā.

The *Dharmamaṅgal* texts are really comprised of sets of folktales and often an autobiographical account of the author. The autobiographical account is sometimes distributed throughout the narrative structure providing a personal touch from time to time as is the case with that of Mānik Rām Gāṅguli; or it is set aside as a separate section at the beginning of the narrative as is the case of Ruprām Chakrabartī's extraordinary account. The historical information contained in the epic of Dharma, could only be gleaned from a rather complicated series of processes, which would separate out layers of the symbological, the mythological, the folkloristic, and the conventional literary -- a series of processes I liken, in my mind's eye, to fractional crystallization in organic chemistry. In order to begin such an investigation, fieldwork to collect variants of the epic in both written and direct oral form would have to be undertaken. In the work, The Historian in Tropical Africa, it has been pointed out that "the usual rules of historical method and critique may be applied to oral documents as well as to written sources."[1] Conversely, it might well be argued that in the case of the Middle Bengali maṅgals, which are certainly folkloristic, if not just a sequence of folktales, the methods applied to the analysis of oral literature should be applied to these written documents as well. If these texts do contain any kind of historical information other than a suggestion of setting, it is fairly certain that it is deeply entwined with traditions and conventions of several kinds. One of these traditional strands is certainly the clusters of tale-types, motifs and their arrangements taken directly from the oral traditions to which the poets had been exposed and which they have made their own. The weaving and re-weaving of these clusters within the manuscripts does indicate a creative re-working -- particularly, insofar as language and overall poetic effect are concerned.

The autobiographical accounts must however speak for themselves. No matter what difficulties may be involved in establishing the historicity of particulars, the two vivid personal testimonies constitute an enrichment of our awareness of the nature of poetic vision in 17th and 18th century Bengali society. Ultimately, their focus is the description of personal "re-vitalization" in the face of the structures of society and individual conscience.

3. The Texts: Translations

a. The text of Ruprām Chakrabartī dated 1649 A.D. is as follows:[2]

For many days my home was in the Kāiti sector Śrīrāmpur. As destiny was merciless, I had four brothers.

No one could know a better Paṇḍit than my father. One hundred and twenty students read in his presence.

Abhirām Rāy was his name and he was a patron the equal of the classical Karṇa and in his Śabhā [court] the puraṇas were recited continuously.

For a number of days, I studied at my own house and within a short time learned Jumara and Amara.

My little brother Rāmeśvara was like my own life to me. My elder Ratneśvara was of a different kind.

My elder brother Ratneśvara was very cruel. Even while eating or resting he spoke words which were like a blazing fire.

When he ate or rested and while he was dreaming in his sleep he spoke coarsely. Year in and year out he quarrelled night and day.

He especially hurt my feelings by his quarreling one Wednesday. Due to his indifference to my feelings a considerable sorrow arose in my mind.

I suppressed my own heartfelt thoughts and secretly prepared my basket of study equipment. Maṇirām Rāy gave me a dhoti to wear.

I took my basket of equipment and departed from there. Rājārām Rāy gave me twelve *paṇas* of cowries.

I took a basket, I took my things for study. There were no upper clothes on my body. Maṇirām Rāy gave me a garment of coarse silk.

I took in that basket manuscripts of Jumara and Amara. I went to the house of a Bhaṭṭācāryya in order to study heresy.

When Raghurām Bhaṭṭācāryya, the son of Kavicandra, saw the manuscripts in the wicker basket he felt pity for me.

He called me son and gave me a place to stay in his own quarters. With delight he taught texts to my great satisfaction.

My guru always read with a great compassion in his heart. He recited on such subjects as kāraka, the notion of case in language, *ṭīkā*, the composition of commentaries on commentaries, *tiṅganta*, the study of inflected verbal bases, and *līlayā*, a kind of metre.

Within seven months that venerable one forced me to read seven *ṭīkās*. For nothing but knowledge my mind thirsted and hungered.

Time and again I reflected on those *ṭīkās*. I discussed the various commentaries -- in each instance the various Chakravartīs accepted defeat through my arguments.

Among all those hundred and twenty students, I always recited first. Bhaṭṭācāryya's vibrant speeches about Bhāratī's arguments were as full of meaningful nectar as Makaranda flowers.

Whenever that guru of mine began to teach in his house at Coupāri, his dark olive body glistened in its superlative handsomeness.

That renowned Paṇḍit, my guru, was made of quantities of mercy. Bhaṭṭācāryya easily defeated Kanād in argument.

Whenever one considers the Vedānta, one takes either the left or the right hand approach. Raghurām Bhaṭṭācāyya was best of all at this.

He read the poet Māgha, the author of the *Śiśu-pāta-vadha*, Śri Harsha's *Naiśadha*, and the *Raghuvaṁśa* with delight. When he read Pigala's

Treatise on Metre, his mind became very satisfied.

One day with no fear in my mind, I was sitting in seclusion and preparing my lessons.

When Bhaṭṭācāryya my teacher overheard me, he was overwhelmed. As I recited the Abduction of Sita, he wept rolling on the ground.

On a Saturday, due to the scheming of Dharma I became sad. By destiny I read the ṭīkā of Māgha that day.

I was sitting in front of the guru and looking at Māgha's text. I became afraid to recite the purva-pakṣa, [the thesis of the argument], before the guru.

My destiny went dark. While trying to piece together the pūrva-pakṣa my botheration increased due to the compounds in the ṭīkā.

He became inflamed when he noticed this and questioned me about the pūrva-pakṣa fully three times.

Then and there, he struck me with the rod on which the manuscripts had been mounted. Since he was so angry that lofty sage shouted mercilessly:

"The whole day is spent to teach you two words. Must I devote myself to one student during the teaching time? One hundred and twenty students stare at me while I have to spend half of the day for just one!"

"Even a few words can tell you so much and whenever it's your turn to recite you always get confused."

"I'm not able to teach you. Go home! Go to Navadvīp or Śāntipur!"

"Vidyānidhi Bhaṭṭācāryya is in Śāntipur. For the sake of studying Bhāratī go to him, you scoundrel!"

"Isn't Jaugrām the place for studying Kanād? Go there! There is no equal to Bhaṭṭācāryya in Śāntipur!"

When he spoke these words like sparks darting from a fire, his flushing face reflected the splendor of spring.

When I heard such words from him, I became terrified. That guru was like the sun -- extraordinarily brilliant in his splendor.

Who will transgress the inviolable words of his guru? But at the thought of studying in Navadvīp my heart was filled with joy.

When I heard the words of my guru, I took my study equipment and made up my mind that I would travel night and day in order to reach Navadvīp.

At the same time it entered my mind that I would go and see my mother.

Again I set out for Śrīrāmpur.

I lost my way, though I kept to the left in the general direction of home. There was little chance of survival in that primeval jungle.

I wandered from place to place and found myself in a marsh with dense foliage. Two sacred falcons of Vishnu were flying low in that sky dark like Vishnu's feet.

At that moment the Lord played a trick on my mind. Through some stratagem of his artifice he created two tigers.

Two tigers sat switching their tails on either side of two steep banks drinking water from the edge of some cowherd's pond.

Since I had dropped *Roots and Euphonics* and the *Subanto-ṭīkā* on the ground, the Lord himself gathered together the texts in that forest.

Since I had finished with texts I had come there due to distress of thirst. Dharma in the guise of a Brahmin appeared with a flower in his hand.

It was on a Saturday exactly at noon when Dharma stood before me with a garland of Chandra flowers around his neck.

Dharma came with a stick in his hand with a garland of Champa flowers round his neck. In the shape of a Brahmin Dharma stood on the pathway.

Immediately Dharma himself collected the scattered leaves of the manuscripts, standing before me in the flesh of a Brahmin.

The golden thread on his neck was elegant like some winged creature. His gold and silver earrings glittered.

Bhagabān himself said, "Don't be afraid! Take this container, these leaves, binding, and your dictionary."

He cried out: "Why are you alone in this forest? I have appeared to you because of your previous austerities!"

"I am Dharma-Ṭhākur and my name is Bāṅkurā Rāy. O Ruprām my child, sing my twelve day song!"

"From today, Ruprām, sing my song and as reward you will obtain great peace of mind!"

The Lord said: "Put away your studies! For today you will sing my *bāramati*!"

"I will give you a *camar*, cymbals, and an unsurpassed *mādali*-drum. You went for study and while all of these days I have wandered in search of you."

"I am Dharma, the primordial one and I have appeared to *you*! Fate had written this on your forehead some time ago."

"Whatever words you speak shall be my song. You will sing always of the qualities of my Being."

"Whenever I will hear the sound of your cymbals, I myself shall certainly fly into the midst of the gathering, O my darling child!"

"Put aside all of the many leaves of your study texts which you have gathered together. Leave them at home! In assemblies devoted to me you will sing my song with great joy!"

When he had said this, he whispered great words of wisdom in my ear. I became afraid even in the daytime and looked in every which direction.

I was about to speak when the Lord placed a necklace of bones about my neck.

Becoming very proud and with full force that Brahmin said "My song is not an occupation for a Brahmin Paṇḍit!"

At the very moment I heard this, the God Nirañjan disappeared. For three days I fasted in honor of Dharma.

In the darkness I was not able to catch a glimpse of the sun's garland. I bound together the leaves of the manuscript and the other equipment and fled from that place quickly.

I wandered running and lost my direction in that forest full of creepers. My garments fluttered from the alarm in my soul.

Compelled by my thirst after the sky, near the close of the day, I drank my fill of water from a pond, belonging to some cutters of conch shells.

It was at twilight when suddenly my own home came in sight. I wanted to offer my respect at my mother's feet.

Sonā and Hīrā my two sisters were sitting next to the door and they said, "Here comes Ruprām-dādā with his basket of study equipment.[3]

At that very moment my brother Ratneśvara came to the house. When I saw my elder brother my body was consumed with a great fever.

Due to my alarm, my body trembled like a palmleaf. I became lost and did not know which way to turn.

The moment I entered the house and sat down, my brother spoke some unkind words. I did not even have a glimpse of mother.

My elder brother screamed mercilessly: "Not so long ago you left in order to study and now today you've come home!"

He threw Jumara and Amara and the dictionary outside. He flung the Subanto-ṭīkā down and it fell apart.

Once more I quietly collected together the manuscripts and my equipment and decided that I would travel day and night to reach Navadvīp for the sake of study.

My two sisters, Sonā and Hīrā, were by the side of the door. I was not able to speak a single word to my mother.

I set out once more with my equipment. I fasted three days for the sake of my destiny.

I arrived at the village of Śanighāṭ and questioned a traveller whom I saw on the road:

"O servant of the Lord, O high one, you are very fortunate...." Even before I could ask him for food he gave me two and a half seers of rice.

With that two and a half seers of rice, I bought fried rice. Afterwards, I went to bathe and worship in the waters of the Damodār.

Then I drank some water with a great satisfaction. Suddenly the fried rice was blown away by the wind.

Since all of the fried rice blew away, I had only that water. I was so weak that I was unable to carry the manuscript a step further.

I arrived at the village of Dignagar. On the way I learned that there were important ceremonies being held in the weaver's quarter.

Due to destiny, I become disappointed easily so it was with some anxiety that I went to the compound of the weaver's in order to ask for dakṣiṇa.

I ran to the weaver's area and when I saw pots of curd and fried rice my heart lept with delight.

I thought that I would fill up on the fried rice and curds, but Dharma-Ṭhākur did not will that the weavers give me any grain.

The dakṣiṇa they brought and gave me was forty cowries. Through the working of my destiny thirty of them were counterfeit.

Taking up my equipment, I set out once more. Eventually I arrived at Eḍal, the seat of a great King.

The name of the Rājā of Goyālābhūm was Ganesh Rāy, he was the crest jewel of his family of Brahmins and was very well endowed.

Nirañjan spoke to him in dreams and had given him many kinds of wealth in order to establish him firmly.

Listen every one! So many things Dharma gave him. Suddenly two golden vessels appeared.

When that Mahārājā saw these huge vessels his heart was filled with delight. At an auspicious time he commissioned me to fashion twelve mańgals.

I sang bāramati and the twelve mańgals. Dharma who is always affectionate to his devotees became satisfied.

Since then I sing songs in the assemblies devoted to Dharma. The texts which I used to study still lie in my quarters.

This was when Shuja was reigning in Rājmahāl and the people were living in great prosperity.

This was when the Caliph Hakim was reigning in Burdwan. The same one who was defeated in the war in the South.

Since then I sing Dharma's song in his meetings. The Brahmin Ruprām whose home is Śrīrāmpur sings.

b. The text of Mānik Rām Gāńguli dated 1781 A.D.:[4]

Listen, O Listen, my friends. I will narrate all of the ways in which the husband-like lord of the universe showed his mercy to me.

For the sake of learning I wandered from place to place. I went to Bhuṛāṛi in hope of studying logic.

I spent one month in preparation for my recitations and the mystery of that comprehensive discipline was somewhat reduced by this great effort.

One night I had an unlikely dream in which my mother died a premature death.

While sobbing loudly, I struck myself across my own forehead. "What has happened? Alas, alas where has mother gone?"

Near where my head was turned in the bed sat a Brahmin who consoled me by reciting a Purāṇa.

He said to me:

"No one is able to undo the destiny ordained by the Supreme Lord." I asked the figure: "Who has taken away my mother and father and where does that one give them shelter?"

That Brahmin answered: "Dharma is the destination of everyone. He is their protector and shelter. Keep your every belief in him and you will most certainly be happy."

"Do not weep, O please do not weep my child! Wake up! Get up! Abandon your sleep!" he said.

"Go quickly out into the world!" that Bhaṭṭācāryya said.

When I experienced this dream I was mystified and there was no happiness in my mind. The morning came after a night of great effort.

I said my goodbyes and took my basket of study equipment and ran very swiftly away without any specific direction.

In seven hours time I approached Vetālan and was, as luck would have it, without a way to cross the river.

Facing into the sun I travelled swiftly and came to Khāṭula where the river is narrow and shallow.

If there is something in your destiny, there comes a time when it happens: on the meadow of Desaṛā, mine appeared with a Brahmin.

To the east under a tree a strange unprecedented figure with a staff in his hand was standing in the path.

In front of my very eyes, a very old man who spoke quite calmly became young in body.

I made the acquaintance of this extraordinary paṇḍit. Some suggestive conversation about the Śāstras followed.

When we had conversed quite a bit, he told me that his name was Rājyadhara Vidyāpati and that his home was in Rañjapur.

He told me in a confidential tone, "You must be careful. You will go with me for the sake of study."

"In this world let your fame be in this form, that the knowledge I shall give you will be the essence of truth."

"Go ahead," he said smilingly. I started to go but he remained seated.

Suddenly everything went dark. I became greatly astonished since that Brahmin was nowhere to be seen.

I was still sitting at the base of a tree with my basket of study equipment as a paṇḍit approached and came near me.

The two sandals [*pādukā*] of Dharma were bound around his neck and he too sat at the base of that tree in order to take rest.

He questioned me rapidly and with care: "Did Rājyadhara Vidyāpati go along this path?"

I asked him: "Why are you looking for him, who is he?" Then the paṇḍit said some words with a sound of authority: "O Child, are you not able to recognize the Brahmin! First serve the lotus-like sandals!"

"Immediately afterwards you will know his identity, you will understand immediately the truth and falsity of my words."

When I heard this, I was thrilled by it and I looked about in all directions and I saw an exquisite lake in the vicinity.

When I had gone to its shore, I saw in that water like ambrosia there were a hundred lotuses in bloom.

I thought to myself: "I will worship at the feet of the lord and with an inclination to the joyousness of agape." I became filled with yearning so I dove in and plucked the lotuses.

When I became conscious again I quickly left that place. When I returned and looked again I saw that there was no lake.

There was no paṇḍit there and there were no sandals, I was still sitting at the base of that tree alone and meditating in my isolation.

When I had meditated and repeated obeisances to Dharma I cast away another lotus into the shoreless waters.

The time was during the end of the day as I drew near to a dwelling place. I went to Rañjapur. It was on the third day.

When I had swiftly crossed over at Hājipur, I quickly drew near the shore of the Tārājuli.

In the same form as before that Brahmin was standing on the pathway. This time there was no stick, but there was a sharp stake in his hand.

In that secluded and lonely place there was not a single soul. The Brahmin came near me like death incarnate. "Today I'm going to kill you with this stake!" I became distressed and offered many praising schemes.

When the Brahmin behaved like a highwayman I became confounded. I said, "How can I make you understand that you are supposed to be a paṇḍit."

The Brahmin said, "I have never seen anyone as ignorant as you. Even Valmiki was a robber!"

"I understand that today you will die a premature death and by accident!" When I heard this my eyes became filled with tears.

When I had become very humbled I finally said to him: "I will go to your presence in hope of study."

Then the Brahmin laughed a little and said: "I will go to Hājipur, I have some work there."

"You go to my residence. I will not delay. I will come soon."

As I turned my face, the Brahmin disappeared. In fear, I ran swiftly to Rañjapur.

I questioned everyone from house to house, but there was no Rājyadhara Vidyāpati in Rañjapur.

When I had bothered with it enough, I returned home. From thinking about it, a violent fever arose in my mind.

While lying on the bed in my room impatiently, once again I saw that Brahmin sitting on the edge of the bed near the side of my head.

"Why are you thinking and making yourself sick?"

"Get up, O Child. Pay attention to my words!"

"Compose the song of Dharma's majesty. Since I have seen a copy, I will help you to make a copy of the saga of Lau Sen."

I asked him a question, "Who are you?" The Brahmin said "I am he whom you served in Desaṛā."

"I am the cause of the universe and my name is Bāṅkurā Rāy. You will not make this known, you must be cautious."

"I will be merciful to your distress if you will but remember that at the end of time I will give you my two fearless feet."

"Ajamil was my devotee and was very devoted. I assumed my four-armed form and was keeping him near to hand."

"And the devotee Sudāmā was unparalled in his respect. You have heard the story of Prahlāda in the Purāṇas."

"I am the three gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. You will worship through non-differentiation and you will not even conceive differentiation."

"That fool who is not able to understand and keeps making a differentiation is really a fool destined for hell and I abandon him!"

"Take an oath that you will certainly compose poetry. Then so will it be! Turn your mind to it!"

I promised with great precisioṇ. Bhagabān said, "O Devotee, take my feet!"

"When twelve days have been completed you will have written my twelve day song. If you delay, you will be miserable!"

He gave me in writing a copy of his own bīja mantra. "Since you have seen it, you will truly compose poetry!"

"Your four brothers will be chanters. Let fame that fills the earth be theirs."

When I heard this, my heart lept up in my throat. I said: "But Lord, if they sing this song they will lose caste."

"They will immediately be disgraced in every land to the delight of their enemies and their friends will laugh behind their backs."

The Lord of the world said: "I am your caste! Your disgrace would be my disgrace!"

"Why do you fear so much me who am an ally? Listen and pay attention to the experience of Mayūrbhaṭṭa."

"I have placed him in Vaikuṇṭha and He has given himself to devotion to Viṣṇu. Now his boundless fame fills the entire world."

"To friends and enemies I will do the same." When he had said this, the Lord vanished.

No one is able to understand the abstruse artifice of divinity. In his own fashion he would show mercy to those without blemish.

From hearing this guilt is lost and work is accomplished. The Brahman Śrī Mānik, the friend of Dharma Rāj recounts this.

. . . .

A Bengali named Gāṅguli whose home is in Belḍihā and whose grandfather was Ānanta Rām and whose father was Gadādhar writes this.

The Lord Dharma does not annul the writing on my forehead which he made when he appeared in the meadow of Desaṛā.

Nirañjan commanded this song for the sake of its narration. He gave in writing his own bīja mantra.

The lowly Brahmin Śrī Mānik sings the Rasa. From hearing this guilt is destroyed and the four objectives of human life are attained.

. . . .

O indeed Dharma Ṭhākur is the very Sun of the day. Rest upon the sandals of the Lord.

4. Social History as Sketched in the Texts

The social data in the two autobiographical accounts can be conveniently divided for descriptive purposes into (1) those pertaining to the social position or role of the author and (2) those pertaining to the individuals and circumstances he encounters. The interplay of culture and personality is frequently in evidence in the content of the narrations as well as in the language itself.[5] The experiences and social contexts of the two authors diverge more widely in dimensions other than that of the century or so that separates them in time; but there appear certain common traits of personality. These traits are related to the "religious dilemma" so apparent in both of the autobiographies. Both accounts depict with vivid attention to detail a period of personal crisis surrounding education, social status, and individual values. The curious similarity of situation has led some to doubt the authenticity of the later text.

The portraits of traditional education given by both authors are of considerable value. Ruprām gives a vivid description of the nature of his experiences under a guru and does not omit a detailed summary of the curriculum. He describes his study of the morphology of case, and verbal stems, metre, and critical composition. He even tells us what books he read. He is equally free with the details of his departure from his studies as well as the general circumstances under which it occurred. The choices of other avenues of learning listed by Ruprām attributed by him to his enraged guru present a picture of Rāṛh as filled with centers of traditional study. There is the feeling that these centers are training grounds for logical disputation and debate.

The personal circumstances of Ruprām in his pursuit of knowledge and the resultant solution to his religious dilemma constitute one of the key insights which the two autobiographical accounts have to offer in the context of social history. Ruprām describes the details of his personal emotional and socio-economic predicament. He is a middle son in a family of at least seven siblings. His father is said to have been a great paṇḍit and is apparently deceased. His elder brother, presumably eldest brother, Ratneśvara, is said to be of a spiteful nature and is the unsympathetic head of the author's household. It is apparent from Ruprām's text that education constituted an escape from a personal and economic dilemma regardless of the author's personal interest in the advancement of his own knowledge. The extreme antagonism between Ruprām and Ratneśvara is striking, and seems to have some economic overtones in view of the latter's outrageous behaviour on Ruprām's return home. The economic aspect is also made clear at the beginning of Ruprām's narrative where it is apparent that the young scholar has gotten funds for study and clothing from a source outside of the immediate family. The fact of extra-familial support might indicate the value placed on education by the local society. At any rate, once the door is closed to an educational escape from his predicament it is not surprising that a dvija is a willing apprentice to the singing profession -- it was apparently a matter of survival. This probability does not necessarily cast any reflection on the authenticity of his "conversion" experience. Possibly it could add depth and dimension to the understanding of a personal religious controversy.

The "conversion experience" or the abrupt re-orientation of the personality to the acceptance of a new set of religio-cultural values is vividly unfolded by both authors as an integral, if not fundamental aspect of their self-descriptions. The emotionality of the language and the narrative content of both pieces is striking and both represent exceptional contributions to the history of personal religious testimony in literature. Mānik Rām Gāṅguli actually presents us with descriptions of his fantasy during the strain of his "conversion". It is interesting to note that both of the "conversions" occurred during the student phases of the authors' lives. This curious correspondence may indicate that a disparity between the traditional values of the guru-centered educational system and the facts of life or values of the surrounding society was greater than is ordinarily imagined by scholars. Perhaps, however, it indicates that Mānik Rām had read Ruprām's account. Questions of social appropriateness or factual similarities in personal experience might also account for borrowing on the part of Mānik Rām, even if ātma-kāhinī is conceived as a literary convention. But there is much controversy[6] among scholars concerning the possibility that Mānik Rām Gāṅguli not only read, but perhaps intentionally chose to model many of the details of his presentation of his own life after the model of Ruprām's autobiographical account of a century earlier. Evidence has been introduced by some scholars that the syllabus of instruction under which Mānik Rām's hero, Lau Sen, was supposedly trained is actually a mere adaptation of Ruprām's account of his own studies. The basic line of argument of such scholars seems to be that if autobiographical details in Ruprām's life are used literarily in Mānik Rām's epic the likelihood that Mānik Rām reported details of his own career accurately is questionable. This is to say that later writers not only adopted or re-worked epic and folkloristic aspects of the texts, but the autobiographical sections as well. The autobiographical accounts themselves would have to be defined as structurally basic portions of the maṅgal literary form and could thereby constitute little more than another literary convention. Such an interpretation of ātma-kāhinī in Bengali literature leaves little scope even for conceiving the possibility that some autobiographical narratives may be based on actual personal history and only organized with attention to the skills of literary detail and conformity.

Though the explanation of the similarity as literary convention may be plausible enough, such an interpretation also does not recognize the plausibility of similar social and personal tensions in Bengali society throughout a century. This is particularly true in view of the fact that the eighteenth century is often conceived as a period of socio-political rupture and reorganization throughout the Indian subcontinent. From Aurangzeb's ascension of the Mughal throne through the gradual decrease of effective Central Mughal control to the arrival of the European trading communities, most of North and East India was undergoing considerable political change. It is likely that these changing aspects of supra-regional power had effects of socio-political and economic as well as personal nature in Bengal.

If a picture of the political organization of the societies presented in the two autobiographical accounts were to be sketched, the outlines would seem to resemble a medieval European fief. It is interesting to note that the terms, "rājā" and "rāy" are probably not well translated by "king" or some other princely title from the European array. Though the local rulers may have fancied themselves as "kingly" in Sanskritic terms and though writers under their "patronage" may have seen fit to draw the "local monarch" in the most ubiquitous of colors, it appears quite likely that the majesty of such terms was actually derived from literary tradition and designed to accommodate the patron's view of his own status. The use of the appellations, "*rājā*" and "*rāy*" may connote little more than a statement of the locus of local political power -- no matter how small the "kingdom" so ruled. Ronald B. Inden has described his view of this kind of political phenomenon and its attendant social basis elsewhere in this volume. Inden has called the political unit in question, "the chiefdom." Though I do not translate "*rājā*" as "chief", the latter term appears to come closer to the truth than would "king" or "prince." The "*rājā-s*" involved appear to be *zamindars* and are probably not "*mahārājā-s*" by any stretch of the imagination. For example, Ruprām speaks of a "Rājā of Goyālābhūm," and describes in somewhat grandiose terms. This "Rājā's" capital is at a place called Eḍal and he is presumably a vassal of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's son, Prince Shuja during his reign of Bengal from Rājmahal and a contemporary of Burdwan's Caliph Hākim. This ruler is described as a devotee of the deity, Dharma Ṭhākur, who is usually the object of Ḍom veneration. Though there is high caste veneration of Dharma observable in West Bengal today either the Rājā of Goyālābhūm was not actually of high caste or much remains to be learned about the devotional fluidity of middle West Bengali society. It would appear that this ruler who is described as *bipra-kula-cūṛāmaṇi* or the "crest jewel of his family of Brahmins" was probably the head of a lineage serving much the same function and exercising the same kinds of authority as Inden's study has described.

There is some information in both texts regarding caste, aside from that already mentioned in other contexts. Though no clear portrait of social organization may be drawn from the material here presented, some details of social organization and attitudes toward various social roles are in evidence. The term used in the texts that has been translated as "caste" is *jāti*. Probably a somewhat better translation of this term might be "extended kin group" or perhaps simply "lineage".

Rupram's encounter with Dharma in the guise of a Brahmin has some bearing on caste attitudes for Dharma is supposed to have left the young poet with a rather cryptic remark: "My song is not an occupation for a Brahmin Paṇḍit!" The remark is rather interesting in several respects. Since Dharma had already asked the young Ruprām to put away his studies and sing his song, he tacitly asked Ruprām to abandon both being a Brahmin and Paṇḍit. Dharma's cryptic line of departure appears to appeal to young Ruprām in his predicament on a basis of *Kāryya* or "occupation". The simple direct language of the line implies a clear semantic cleavage between being a Brahmin Paṇḍit and a singer of Dharma's songs. That a social problem arises with regard to singing Dharma's songs and maintaining Brahmin standing is again made clear in Mānik Rām's account and also in an encounter with the deity. After requesting that Mānik Rām compose poetry in honor of him, Dharma announces that Mānik Rām's four brothers will chant his compositions. At this, Mānik Rām is horrified and appeals to Dharma that his brothers will not only lose caste, but will actually be disgraced to the point of considerable social scorn. Dharma attempts to assuage his social apprehensions by offering one of the most remarkable lines in Mānik Rām's text: "I am your caste!" This vivid pronouncement is an abrogation of social identity and an affirmation of spiritual jāti or lineage. Though one does not know whether Dharma's "kingdom" is "not of this world", the ideology is somewhat reminiscent of Christ's notion of two realms. In fact, the problem of social identity faced by both writers is an old conflict, faced by many in the religious history of man -- the conflict between social role and spiritual persuasion. This conflict is particularly apparent in the difference between the concept of jāti and the classical Indian varṇa theory, where social standing was said to be a mark of spiritual excellence and according to which it was theoretically possible for a man of lower status to be elevated for spiritual merit and endeavor. The Indian tradition has a history of conflicts between social and religious identity; these two autobiographical accounts offer further illustrations of it. These dilemmas, however, do not prevent either Ruprām or Mānik Rām from using dvija in their signature lines.

There are many details relating to manners and customs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which are presented in the texts, most of which require little explanation. Ruprām's description, however, includes one rather amazing detail of language. On the occasion of Ruprām's arrival home his two sisters are said to have remarked: "Here comes Ruprām-dādā with his basket of study equipment!" Whether Ruprām was simply reporting a contemporary colloquial usage or filling in syllables for his metre, the use of kinship terminology after the name is of some interest. "Dādā" ordinarily refers to an "elder brother". Whether Ruprām is simply elder to them and is thus entitled to the use of the term or the term was to be used in speaking to Ruprām is not known. It is interesting that near the beginning of Ruprām's account he refers to his own eldest brother first as baṛo dādā. There seem to be some conventions of reference and address here that are of interest. Whether the meaning of dādā has changed since the seventeenth century and was then a necessary form of address and reference in much the same was as Ajit-babu might be today is uncertain from the evidence in the text.

Both accounts reflect consciousness of social identity in a number of ways. The Bengali devotion to genealogy is found in both texts. Mānik Rām is careful to let us know the names of his ancestors and the location in which they lived. Ruprām, as indicated previously, tells us about his immediate family in a manner much like that of European autobiography. Both writers, without disavowing their hereditary social position, communicate a sense of mission almost evangelistic in its intent. These learned men appear anxious to display the training to which their status entitled them in their adopted social positions as poet-agents of Dharma's cause. Both writers appear to have "a message" which they wish to disseminate in the society of their times. In both cases the pathways to their chosen professions as poet-singers were riddled with the conflicts of conscience and society about which neither is silent.

5. Literary Criticism and Cultural Dimensions

The power of the two styles lies in their consistency of expression -- the ability to maintain the same fluency while focusing on abstract concepts and the details of the daily rounds. Both writers give themselves ample opportunity to display their Sanskritic learning and their mastery of folklore, but in neither case is the operation of the movement between the abstract and the concrete impaired or cleaved into an uneven effect. The use of both colloquial or village Bengali and epithets or syntax drawn from the Sanskritic does not jar the unity of these successions of experience etched out from the minds of scholars turned singers. This very focus on successive actions -- seeming of no importance -- creates a milieu of reality which makes the imaginative parts assume the garb of reality too. Here we are near the kernel of that which characterizes every folk-poetry of any culture, viz. the forceful description of basic and self-evident things, which from time to time approaches a delightful naivete.

We must notice the manner in which the transformation of oral tradition to written text has affected the style of the material. The language has become simple -- direct and juicy; its Sanskritic elaboration merely heightens this effect. The words have been projected into a rhythmic frame suitable for memorization and recitation. The changes of speaker and reference achieve what we today can call a cinematographic effect. The texts become songs carrying the force of self-experienced conviction; they vibrate with life and color. Such autobiography is not merely a description of an individual life. It is a literary form which has burst the bonds of convention, transforming an account of self through techniques of oral narrative into a vibrant collage of human seeking -- well worthy of the name literature.

There is a hallucinatory quality about both texts. Perhaps a study of this will eventually reveal a dimension more emotional than contemplative. On another level the very cinematographic rendering of feelings and events points to the distinct probability that these maṅgals were enacted on a stage as the texts were unfolded by the chanter. The visually-present incisiveness with which details are sketched suggests that the autobiographies themselves have been shaped both by life and by the authors' roles as composing narrators of an enacted show of Dharma's tale.

Imaginative vision is yoked with narration and is juxtaposed to minute details of personal experience. Such authors are walking a very thin borderline between collapse and creativity, or between daily life and a no man's land of dreams. Theirs is a perfect analysis of this frontier of conflict between fear of that which might come from above and faith in their own abilities. We cannot fail to note the élan vital which saturates the whole of both texts. It surges beneath, to give the words their magic, reflecting as they do minds which are toiling to solve and resolve the conflict between the powers of superstition and those of kindness and justice. The harshness, the unpardonability of life which is here expressed is a mirror of people who know what the fight for survival means. Its harshness and intensity is that of the Bengali sun.

NOTES

*The author wishes to acknowledge the many useful and delightful suggestions in the translated materials given by Dr. Edward C. Dimock, his professor at the University of Chicago. He also would like to acknowledge the kindness and patience of Dr. Aniusuzziman of Dacca University who read the entire manuscript of the translation and provided many eye-opening suggestions. He expresses his gratitude to Miss Roushan Jahan and Mr. Muzzafer Ahmed for several years of personal tutoring in Middle Bengali. The author also thanks Miss Ingrid Aall for some valuable suggestions included in the final paragraphs of the article.

[1] Vansina, J., Mauny, R., and Thomas, L. V. (eds.) The Historian in Tropical Africa (London, 1964), p. 60.

[2] For the text of the particular Bengali version which is translated below, cf. Sen, Sukumār, Maṇḍal, Panchānan, and Sen, Sunandā, Ruprāmer Dharmamaṅgal, 2nd edition, Epic Publishers, Calcutta: 1363 B. E., pp. 12-15.

[3] This line is extremely uncertain in its precise meaning, since the grammar and syntax as written in this text could convey a variety of meanings. E.g. if tāder is supplied at the beginning of the line, the translation could read: "Their older brother Ruprām came bringing his basket of study equipment." The shift of relation from the personal character of narration to the third person form is, however, jarring in its effect. Another plausible interpretation is to read dādā as vocative, in the context of the translation given in the body of the paper -- "O dādā, here comes . . .". This reading would have his sisters alerting Ratṅesvara concerning the unexpected arrival of Ruprām. The syntax would appear to weigh against this last interpretation. An interpretation consistent with the translation chosen, and some of its problems, is given below.

[4] The text is a translation of the Bengali version found in Datta, Bijita-Kumār and Datta, Sunandā, Mānikrām Gāṅguli Viracita Dharmamaṅgal, University of Calcutta, Calcutta: 1960 A.D., pp. 19-24, 28. The longer breaks in the printed translation below indicate that either eulogies of Dharma or beginnings of the narrative of the folk-epic itself that were integrated into the autobiographical account have been omitted for purposes of this study.

[5] An excellent example of this is to be found in the line of Rupram translated as: "Compelled by my thirst after the sky near the close of the day, I drank my fill of water from a pond, belonging to some cutter of conch shells." In this line, the author uses the

social identity of the owners of the pond in the context of his own experience to express a Vaiṣṇava bias which is not only an aspect of his personal religious conviction, easily demonstrated throughout his version of the folk epic, but is almost as certainly a vital dimension of the matrix of Bengali folk culture during the middle periods. The interknitting of various folk and regional religious beliefs is a commonplace of Bengali history.

[6] Cf. e.g. Aṣutosh Bhaṭṭācārya, Maṅgal-kāvyer-itihās.

STUDY III: THE IDEAL MAN IN SOCIETY*

in Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇava - sahajiyā literature

Edward C. Dimock, Jr.

University of Chicago

S. B. Dasgupta speaks of the "bitter attacks" of the Tāntrics on "the commonly accepted practices and religious views of the orthodox systems."[1] The Sahajiyās, at least, seem to have been relatively quiet about it. Society being what it is, few Sahajiyās seem to have gone about advertising their manner of worship, which was somewhat unconventional. Women were essential to its progress -- and not merely women, but some indications are, women of the lowest possible castes. As Professor Clark has mentioned, the caryā-padas speak of Ḍom women in this connection,[2] and according to tradition Caṇḍīdāsa's partner in ritual sexual intercourse was a washerwoman. The extremity of this contrariness is intriguing.

Many societies in one way or another allow for deviation. Hoebel, for example, tells us that among the Cheyenne Indians there is a conventionalized kind of "contrariness" according to which the "contrary" man rejects social relations to such an extent that everything he does and even says is the reverse of the accepted pattern.[3] The same allowance is made by the Comanches.[4] A noteworthy characteristic, however, of such contraries as these is their extreme recklessness in battle. The institutions, therefore, says Hoebel "may be seen as providing a customary outlet through which extreme cases of anxiety are tuned constructively to the social benefit of a warrior nation."[5] It would seem then that in these cases the contrary man is allowed his contrariness because, in the last analysis, it affirms a basic value of society.

There is something of the same tolerated deviation in the institution of the Saturnalia, or Holi, or Carnival, or New Year's Eve, or whatever it may be called in various time and places -- a periodic, ritual overturning of the social order. Such phenomena Mircea Eliade calls the periodic "retrogression of the cosmos into chaos,"[6] the point of which is less the participation of the individual in chaos (although there is certainly some psychological value in a societally countenanced blowing-off of steam) than it is his participation in the recreation of order after chaos. For the social order is recreated pure, and assumedly the individual resumes his place within it a more contented, if not necessarily a better, man. But such a ritual recreation of the social order is again an affirmation of the essential validity of that order.

It is tempting to feel that the Sahajiyā and Tāntric anti-traditionalism is a mechanism for deviation and protest provided by the society itself and to see in it a protracted Saturnalia. But in fact an unqualified case would be difficult to make for this. The Tāntric tradition did indeed provide a refuge for antinomians of various types, as well as a tradition and a set of rituals for those who, because of caste or sex, could not participate satisfyingly in the Brahmanical system. But in thinking about the Sahajiyā and other left-hand Tāntric systems, certain modifying factors must be considered.

First of all, though the aim of the Sahajiyā and in fact that of all Tāntrism was conscious deviation from the Veda-derived Brahmanism, this deviation was not welcomed by the dominant Brahmanical society as enthusiastically as contrary men or the Saturnalia have been in their settings; Tāntrism does not affirm the basic social order; it rather provides an alternative to it. Secondly, the Sahajiyā was an esoteric school. Its deviation was not always socially visible. In most social ways, it seems that the Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyās were exemplary citizens, rarely given, like the Pāśupatas and other Indian deviants, to demonstrating their convictions of the meaninglessness of the world by public exhibitions of obscenity and sloth.[7] Whatever demonstrations the Sahajiyās might have made were largely private. Thirdly, the numbers of Sahajiyās were rather strictly limited. The transmission of the secret doctrines from guru to disciple effectively stemmed whatever tendency there may have been for crowds of people whose desire was merely for release from sexual or other tensions to demand admission to the mysteries. It has often been suggested that it is characteristic of a society with rigid sexual mores -- the Cheyenne, for example -- to provide controlled means of indulgence, for the release of what George Orwell calls the "unofficial self", whose tastes lie toward "safety, soft beds, pots of beer, and women with 'voluptuous' figures".[8] A few people whose major concern was with pots of beer and voluptuous women may have got by the Sahajiyā screening processes. But one's lusts would have had to be very strong indeed, and one's frustrations very great, to carry him through the stringent and arduous training necessary before sexual ritual was undertaken. And though from one point of view a society with rigid sexual mores, Indians have always had sufficiently ambivalent values to allow satisfaction for those whose fancies lay in voluptous directions, without the necessity of any pretense of religion.

There are innumerable social and psychological reasons why a man may act in a manner contrary to the accepted norm, and innumerable reasons apart from those above why his society may, if not giving its blessing to such adverse behavior, at least tolerate it. Some people, like those called Kālāmukhas, seem to feel that power, magical power, is gained by the flouting of moral and social law, and as a result bathe in the ashes of burned corpses, eat from human skulls, and drink wine.[9] Others, such as the Kāpālikas, "attain to emancipation through the meditation on a supreme being residing in the female organ. [The Kāpālika] is adorned with garlands of human bones, takes his food from a skull, drinks wine from the skull of a Brahmin, worhsips Mahābhairava with human sacrifice, and offers oblations of human flesh to the fire."[10] And others, less dramatically, go naked or make gestures of fornication or insult women, and in various other ways behave like madmen.[11] Indian society has always tolerated such expressions as outward manifestation of personal release from the world and from the laws of society. Within its own system, even Brahmanical society allowed for such behavior: a *saṃnyāsin*, by shaving his head and taking the staff and begging bowl, shucks off caste and family and proclaims the fact that society no longer has any hold over him. It is possible too to imagine that in such a highly structured society as that of India a deviant individual performs the role of scapegoat, taking the frustrations of an admiring society upon himself and relieving them vicariously. The social deviant is a drunken Indra, or a Śiva, who drinks the poison that is about to flood the world.[12]

The Sahajiyās seem to have been little prone to flaunt their convictions openly. But the convictions are there. To the Sahajiyās, society and the whole seeming order of the universe are based on *māyā*, or falseness. Thus social values have no real meaning, and the actions of the Sahajiyā cannot be judged in terms of such values. The way of truth is entirely different from the accepted way of society; the two ways may occasionally overlap, or they may not.

The crucial point in considering the social attitudes of the Sahajiyās is the doctrine of "equality" or "sameness". To the boy Caitanya, sweets and dirt were the same. So, to a Sahajiyā, a Brahman and an untouchable are the same. So are men and women. So are "pure" and "impure" things to eat and drink. It is a translation into practice of the old Tāntric (and Jungian) belief in the conjunction of opposites: the apparent duality of things must be destroyed before there can be reversion to the true and ultimate unity, the undisturbed and blissful state of *sahaja*. The state of unity is emulated in the union of male and female, of Brahman and Ḍom, of high and low; in flesh and fish and wine is recognition of the fact that there is neither pure nor impure, that mud and sweets are the same -- as indeed are the blessing and curses of mankind.

The question that arises is one of the tension between the necessity of the Sahajiyā to live according to his Sahajiyā belief and deny the world as untrue and that of his continuing to live within society. For while man is the microcosm, himself divinity, and thus the sole repository of truth and standard of proper conduct, he evidently still feels some necessity for interacting with the other microcosms around. As opposed to the Kāpālikas and others, the standard of this interaction is unexpectedly exemplary. At least, it is as exemplary as that of the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas.

There are two ways of explaining this. The first is that the Sahajiyā is an esoteric cult that needs esoterism to live; it is a flower that blooms only in the darkness and is destroyed by exposure to the light of day. What is unseen is unexposed, and to take on the protective coloring of orthodox Vaiṣṇavism is at least to allow the Sahajiyā to remain unseen.

The second explanation is that in the social, rather than the religious situation the Vaiṣṇava half of the Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā personality exerts itself. The Vaiṣṇava self, it might be said, is the official self; this self -- excepting certain manifestations of religious conviction, such as the ecstatic expression of devotion, which are looked on by the rest of society as somewhat strange -- is a social being. The unofficial self is then the Sahajiyā self, which, while not the same as Orwell's libertine, is not only its own moral arbiter but which because of its elect nature goes against all normal standards. The personality of the Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyā, it would seem, was somewhat schizophrenic. As a Vaiṣṇava, his actions in social situations usually coincided with the standards of the society, though when he was behaving in a socially acceptable way, it was because the ideals of the society and the ideals of his religious belief happened to come together at that point. As a pure Sahajiyā, believing that the ideals of society could never be true, the foundations of society being themselves false, he would have been compelled to act not asocially, but antisocially. The Sahajiyās accepted the poetic imagery of the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas, reserving the right to interpret it differently; therefore, only one familiar with differences in doctrine could identify most poems as either Vaiṣṇava or Sahajiyā. In the same way, the Sahajiyās behaved much like other Vaiṣṇavas who have attained their goal. The goals of the two were different but the expression of their attainment was the same. How then did the orthodox Vaiṣṇava behave?

The Views of Orthodox Vaiṣṇavism.

The literature of the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas devotes a fair amount of space to the consideration of what constitutes an ideal man, a true bhakta. The true bhakta is a man of very considerable mettle. He has, for example, no desire for material things or for the gratification of himself. His sole object in life is the worship and service of Kṛṣṇa. He is as indifferent to pleasure and to pain as were the Gopīs, to whom "their own pleasure and pain was not a concern; the happiness of Kṛṣṇa was the sole root of their desires."[13] He has, in fact, complete indifference. All things are the same to him, as is shown by the story that one day Caitnaya's mother brought him some sweets, and said to him:

> "Eat this," and went about her house-work. But the boy hid himself, and began to eat a lump of dirt. When Śacī saw this, she came running, and snatching away the dirt, she said, "Why are you eating this?" The child began to weep, and said, "Why are you angry? You gave me dirt to eat; how am I at fault? Sweets are only dirt in changed form. This is earth, that is earth; what is the difference between them?"[14]

The true bhakta is as humble and unassuming as a blade of grass; he is patient and forbearing and never reproaches or censures anyone for any cause: "[The bhakta] will be humble as grass; he will take the name of Hari incessantly; he will be modest, and will honor others. He will be patient as a tree; though he be beaten and cursed, he will say nothing, as a tree says nothing even when it is cut. A tree does not beg for water, even when it dries and shrivels in the heat of the sun."[15] The true bhakta is merciful and harms no one; he is truthful; he sees all things as equal, pleasure and pain, sweets and dirt; he is pure;[16] he is charitable, gentle, holy, lowly, and humble, friend and benefactor to all, calm; he has Kṛṣṇa as his only refuge; he is free from desire, moderate in taking food and in all things; he honors all things other than himself; he is humble, grave, compassionate, friendly, poetic,[17] skillful, and silent.[18]

It will be generally agreed that these are excellent ideals. But to the analyst, however admiring, their very excellence raises problems. These virtues are social as well as personal. But the Vaiṣṇavas were not always accepted by the society in which they lived, and they did not always accept it. Vaiṣṇavism itself was slightly socially deviant.

We are told by early Vaiṣṇava writers (though perhaps with pious exaggeration) that sixteenth and seventeenth century Bengal was rife with the fairly fundamental blood rites of Sāktism: "The whole world was devoid of Kṛṣṇa-Rāma bhakti . . . the people sang the praises of Caṇḍī far into the night, and made offerings in pūjā to Vāsulī; with wine and flesh and they worshipped the Yakṣas. In the uproar . . . no one heard the name of Kṛṣṇa."[19] And in the area of Ketori-grām, the Narottama-vilāsa tells us, "the people of the country are practiced in godless deeds, knowing nothing of true dharma and karma, and doing indescribably evil things. At the doors of their houses is the blood of goats and sheep and buffaloes. Some say that they use the severed heads of men. . . . Lascivious women stay with them, and they use flesh and wine in their worship."[20]

The Vaiṣṇavas, to judge from the tone of their texts, had little appreciation of such practices; and the people who practiced these rituals returned the feeling in kind. One day, when kīrtana, the Vaiṣṇava worship with the singing of the praises of Kṛṣṇa, was going on in the house of Caitanya's neighbor Śrīvāsa, the unbelievers "gathered outside the house, fuming and burning with rage, and talked about how they might bring sorrow to Śrīvāsa. One day a Brahman named Gopālacapala, the chief among these evil people and a foul-mouthed man, brought all the paraphernalia for the worship of [the goddess] Bhavānī, and in the night scattered them and smeared them on the door of the house of Śrīvāsa."[21] The "paraphernalia" included a pot of wine, which was most offensive to a gentle Vaiṣṇava. Nor were the Śāktas the only ones who felt offended by the Vaiṣṇavas. We are told that Haridāsa, a convert from Islam and a Sufi epitome of Vaiṣṇava humility and strength, was betrayed to the Muslim rulers by jealous Brahmans and whipped because of his apostasy through twenty-two market places, a brutal punishment through which he lived only because of his deep faith.[22] And various other Brahmans tried their best to destroy Caitanya's movement by going to the Muslim rulers and telling them that

Caitanya was a drunkard, a trouble-making saboteur of real Hinduism, and in general a man whom both Muslims and Hindus could very well get along without.[23]

The reasons for such antagonism are several. First, Haridāsa was persecuted by the Brahmans because of his exceptional piety and by the Muslims because he had left Islam. Indeed, the magnetism of Caitanya and the warm, internalized religion that he taught, most congenial to Islamic Sufis, may have been responsible for extensive "conversion" and for equally extensive antagonism.[24] Secondly, the Vaiṣṇavas did not always interpret the social hierarchy in terms of caste, as did the carriers of the Brahmanical tradition. This would have been enough to have made them disliked by believers in the status quo. For Caitanya, whom we notice countenancing the caste structure of society in various situations, saw society somewhat differently in the light of religion. He said, in effect, that the accepted ways of society were not wrong, but merely external and therefore incomplete. The Brahmanical tradition had provided an outlet for asocial activity in its institution of *saṃnyāsa*. But *saṃnyāsa* was an institution, to be undertaken by men as a stage in the well-ordered life structured by Brahmanical tradition. The Vaiṣṇavas, coming upon the scene, claimed that the laws of society do not apply to any man who knows in his heart that he is released; thus all social control was potentially eliminated.[25] It is not hard to imagine that this may have been considered subversive.

To the Vaiṣṇavas, the immediacy of God, felt in *bhakti*, and not the standards set by men, should be the measure of acceptable behavior. If the *bhakta*, then, is gentle and humble and forbearing, it is because these are religious virtues that also happen to be social ones. This does not mean that society is wholly wrong. Its values are just not profound enough. If a man is a true *bhakta*, his actions are inevitably good. When such actions coincide with social values, so much the better; and such coincidence is far more frequent among the Vaiṣṇavas than among, for instance, the Kāpālikas.

Sometimes the two sets of values did not coincide, however, There is an instructive story of how Caitanya persuaded Vāsudeva Sārvabhauma, the great scholar, to take *prasāda*, food which had been offered the deity and thus blessed, without first having washed his hands. Caitanya says: "Today all my desires have been fulfilled, for today Sārvabhauma has put his faith in *mahāprasāda* [i.e., the great or true *prasāda*, the grace of Kṛṣṇa, which has nothing to do with convention or ritual]. Today he is freed from delusion, and has taken refuge in Kṛṣṇa. . . . Today, O Sārvabhauma, you have broken the ties with your body, and have lopped off the bonds of falseness."[26] Things are pure because they are sacred to Kṛṣṇa, not because they are thought to be pure by men. If a Vaiṣṇava acts like a madman, singing and dancing, it is Kṛṣṇa in his heart that makes him act so. "I repeated Kṛṣṇa's name incessantly, and my mind became unhinged. I could not be calm -- I became mad, and so I laugh and weep and dance and sing. . . . Once, my mind was calm, but in the name of Kṛṣṇa my rationality has disappeared."[27] It seems that others agreed and looked at the *bhaktas* a little askance.

Not only were the bhaktas recognized by their unashamed "madness", but they recognized their own differences from the rest of society. True to their conviction of salvation, they did not hesitate to proclaim all those who were not bhaktas fools who indulged themselves in sophistry and idle argument and did not understand the truth.[28] Śiva and the other gods, they said, can be worshipped only as aspects of Kṛṣṇa.[29] "Sin" is denial of Kṛṣṇa as the highest god.[30] In general, despite the gentleness and charity of the Vaiṣṇavas, it is not hard to understand why people were on occasion annoyed by them.

The Vaiṣṇavas say that there are essentially two types of people, those who have the capacity for bhakti and those who are naturally beyong the pale. The former group is two-fold: those who by their birth and nature are in a state of worship and devotion, and those who are entangled in the web of material nature -- in other words the vast majority of us. Or, borrowing from Tāntric thought, which divides matter into three types, and from the Bhagavadgītā, which classifies men accordingly, they say that people can be, like Caitanya sāttvika -- calm, pure, refined, wise, free from passion and desire, and so on -- or they can be, like most of the rest of us, tāmasa (or, sometimes pāśu -- "beast") -- lustful, bound by pity, delusion, fear, shame, hatred and so on. The middle men, rājasa, are not especially significant for these purposes.[31]

The Views of the Sahajiyās.

The Sahajiyās, of course, adopted these classifications.[32] The sāttvika man is one who has attained the goal, the sahaja-mānuṣa, one who has realized his own true nature. Some men may be born in such a state of realization, but most of us must reach it by arduous training, purified by discipline. The Rūpānugabhajanadarpaṇa makes the point by an analogy: a mother's love for her child is natural, a state of grace that can be reached by non-mothers only by training. "The mother's love for her son is natural [sahaja] and constant in her heart; the hearts of corrupted people need training. In the same way, the ever-perfect wonderful prema for Kṛṣṇa is not apparent to the creature bound in delusion; he gains the state of sahaja only by cultivating it. But when that state is brought about, his bonds are loosed, and he dances in the joy of Vraja."[33] The state of sahaja is obtainable by all men except those who are naturally beyond the pale and for whom there is no hope whatever.

Of the two major classes of men, the Sahajiyā texts concern themselves with those who are trying to reach the sahaja and how they act once they get there. Metaphysically, once a man reaches the state of sahaja, he is not subject to rebirth; he remains in the eternal place of Kṛṣṇa, in bliss, to eternity: "He who is subject to rebirth in the Brahma-egg [i.e., the world] is a sāmānya [ordinary] man; he comes and goes in life and death. The Sahajiyā man remains forever in the eternal place, within Goloka; in him is manifested the Lord of Vṛndāvana, absorbed in bliss."[34] This is manifested in worldly life in various ways. As he is in possession of the truth, he can dispense with ritual matters.

He needs a *guru* no longer; meditation and repetition of the mantras alone can give him the complete religious experience: "He needs no *guru*, and no direction; his constant refuge is in the *bīja-mantra*."[35]

The rest of the world, meanwhile, wanders about in error: "All the people of the world wander about in error; they do not know the hidden truths. They do not know the *prema* of the Sahajiyā man."[36] One who knows the *sahaja* is "dead in life"; he no longer feels the pull of *kāma* and the delusive, ensnaring qualities of the world on his material nature. "He is dead while yet alive; he is the best of men. A sign of him is that he experiences the ultimate state [*mahābhāva*]: he has reached the farther shore."[37] His condition is one of complete indifference, in which there is no longer any distinction between the human and divine in him: "His material self [*rūpa*] has become divine [*svarūpa*]; there is no difference between them."[38] Like Caitanya, who was born a *sahaja-mānuṣa*, he distributes *prema* throughout the world: "The *sahaja-mānuṣa* is the highest of the gods, who spreads *prema* throughout the world. . . . He enjoys the bliss of *prema*."[39] He is calm and steady and moves directly toward the goal; he is not distracted by the wild activity of the world: "He knows the truth about himself and about what is not himself and about the ultimate pleasure; his mind is firmly fixed upon the motionless *sahaja*."[40] He who remains steadfast amidst the dance of *māyā* is accounted a wise man in all three worlds; he alone who is unshaken is called *śānta*, who is at peace; if he is fearless, the world [*māyā*] does not devour him."[41]

In a manner of speaking, these are ways in which a Sahajiyā knows himself; they are necessarily characteristics that make him visible in the world at large. There are some ways in which the texts say a *sahaja-mānuṣa* may be discerned. Like other Vaiṣṇavas, he stands out vividly because he is silent about his accomplishments: "He who keeps saying 'I am a *rasika*' is no true *rasika*."[42] In other ways too, he behaves like other Vaiṣṇavas. He is also pure, morally good, and true.[43] He has conquered the attractions of *māyā*,[44] he is indifferent to the world: poison and nectar are the same to him.[45] He accounts himself as insignificant: Being at peace within himself, he does not attempt to take precedence, nor does he know good or evil. He looks upon other men as great, but accounts himself as nothing. He does not say, in conceit and pride, 'I am a servant of Kṛṣṇa.' He thinks of himself as grass or a tree, which says nothing even when it is cut.[46]

It would have been difficult for a bystander to tell the difference between an orthodox and a Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava. And it is difficult for the unpracticed Bengali eye even today; the contemptuous term *boiṣṭom* (Vaiṣṇava) is sometimes used colloquially with reference to a group reputed to have questionable sexual practices. No finer distinctions are made.

It seems that the possibilities of such confusion were recognized by the orthodox Vaiṣṇavas even in Caitanya's time. Caitanya's companion Svarūpa Dāmodara was a wise and perceptive man. Once it happened that Caitanya had taken under his wing a young Brahman boy whose mother was a young and beautiful widow. Svarūpa said to Caitanya:

> You are God, absolute and independent. You can do whatever you will, and no one can contest your actions. But you cannot silence the foul-mouthed people of the world. You are learned, and do not consider such things. But why do you have to do with the son of the Brahman widow? Though she is a Brahman, and pious, and ascetic, she has a fault, and that is that she is young and beautiful. You are young and handsome. You are giving people the opportunity to gossip.[47]

The possibilities of such misinterpretation would push even further the natural Vaiṣṇava tendency toward asceticism.

The distinctions were not always visible, even to some who can hardly be classed as idle onlookers, among them the Gosvāmins of Vṛndāvana. For it is recorded in several places that Nityānanda's wife Jāhnavā-devi, herself a Sahajiyā, was welcomed by them with great warmth. Even allowing for pious exaggeration, the *Narottama-vilāsa*, which is not noticeably a Sahajiyā text, waxes rather enthusiastic on the subject: "Gopāla Bhaṭṭa, Bhūgarbha, Lokanātha, Jīva, Kṛṣṇa-paṇḍita, and the rest, when they saw Jāhnavā-Īśvarī, were indescribably happy. . . . They were greatly moved, and could not control their tears. Falling to the earth, they made obeisance at the feet of Īśvarī."[48] But then perhaps they did not care whether she was a Sahajiyā or not.

As for the orthodox Vaiṣṇava, standards of morality for the Sahajiyā are not set by society or tradition;[49] they are set entirely within the individual himself.[50] The *sahaja-mānuṣa* is thus not at all concerned with what the world calls right and wrong. He knows neither good nor evil, for "in the *sahaja* all is undifferentiated. The [*sahaja-mānuṣa*] is not a slave to material things. He knows neither right nor wrong. He opposes nothing, but holds God perpetually in his heart."[51]

All of this being so, there were occasions on which Vaiṣṇava-sahajiyās, like their orthodox counterparts, ran head-on into the rest of society. The society, not making fine distinctions, considered them all mad. But that "even the wise do not understand the speech and actions" of the *sahaja-mānuṣa*[52] did not trouble the Sahajiyās in the least. The uninitiated see only his outward actions; they do not see his inner calm. "In this way, in emotion, he raves, seemingly mad, like a man who has lost all his earthly wealth. But inwardly he is calm, as he inquires about the five."[53]

All Vaiṣṇavas, then, follow the inner light that seems to lead them along the same paths. But the Sahajiyās are singularly outspoken about the necessity for this. The actions of the ordinary men of the world are based on fear, shame, and ignorance. These are the products of a false view of the world.[54] The *sahaja-mānuṣa* knows better than this. "Neither the Vedas nor the *dharma* of men hold any meaning for him, for the *sahaja-mānuṣa* has abandoned [the duties of] his birth and [accepted] conduct. . . . He has neither shame nor fear, and is not controlled by these, which are the constant companions of all."[55] Ordinary standards are based on falsity, on untruth, on māyā. The sahaja-mānuṣa who knows truth must go against them. This is different from the orthodox view, that the bhakta goes against societal standards when they differ from his own. The Sahajiyā, doctrinally at least, stands against society and all its values: "In the abandonment of the Vedas and the giving up of family is the birth of prema."[56] It cannot be put much more strongly than this: "The actions of the sahajiyā-mānuṣa are strongly contrary."[57]

The pure Sahajiyā, the unofficial self, would then be an entirely antisocial being if the official Vaiṣṇava self did not remain in control. But as a different doctrine did not prevent them from adopting Vaiṣṇava poetic imagery, so a basically different attitude toward society did not prevent the Sahajiyās from adopting, overtly at least, Vaiṣṇava behavior. Sahajiyās reserved the logical consequences of the Sahajiyā part of their belief for the privacy of their ritual.

NOTES

*This paper has been previously published as Chapter IV of the author's The Place of the Hidden Moon, Erotic Mysticism in the Vaiṣṇava-Sahajiyā Cult of Bengal (University of Chicago Press, 1966). It was unpublished and in slightly different form when read at the Conference. The editors are grateful to the University of Chicago Press for permission to reprint the material here.

[1] Obscure Religious Cults; 2nd edition, Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopādhyāya, 1962; p. 78.

[2] For example caryā no. 10 of Kānhu opens: "Outside the city, O Domnī, you go to your hovel, after touching the shaven Brahman." The Ḍom woman represents a curious complex of symbols and beliefs, some of which are suggested by Mircea Eliade in Yoga, Immortality and Freedom, New York: Pantheon Books, 1958; p. 261 n.

[3] S. Adamson Hoebel, The Cheyennes, New York: Holt, Reinhardt, and Winston, 1960; pp. 95 f.

[4] Ralph Linton in Abram Kardiner (ed.), The Psychological Frontiers of Society, New York: Columbia University Press, 1945; p. 62.

[5] Hoebel, loc. cit.

[6] Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, New York: Harper, 1959; pp. 79 ff.

[7] See Daniel H. H. Ingalls, "Cynics and Pāśupatas: The Seeking of Dishonor", Harvard Theological Review, LV (1962) No. 4.

[8] See Orwell's essay, "The Art of Donald McGill"; the notion is taken up by E. M. W. Tillyard in Shakespeare's History Plays, (London: Chatto and Windus, 1944) where it is applied to Falstaff and Prince Hal.

[9] C. H. Chakravarti, The Tantras: Studies on their Religion and Literature, Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1963; p. 50.

[10] Ibid., p. 52. See also Jitendramāth Banyopādhyāya, Pañcopāsana, Calcutta: . L. Mukhopādhyāya, 1960; pp. 160-162.

[11] Ingalls, "Cynics and Pāśupatas".

[12] Mrs. Wendy O'Flaherty of Harvard pointed this out in a paper called "The Immoral Immortals", presented at a seminar at the American

Institute of Indian Studies in Calcutta in 1963.

[13] *Caitanya-carmitāmṛta* (CC) of Kṛṣṇa-dāsa Kavirājā, *Ādilīlā* 4:149.

[14] Ibid., 14:21 ff.

[15] Ibid., 17:23 ff.

[16] The term used is *nirdoṣa*, "free from fault". The commentary says: "The *doṣa* [faults] can be of various kinds; among them, eighteen are most serious: delusion or folly, sloth, error, corase passion or passion without benefit of prema, passion which brings pain to others, inconstancy, drunkenness, envy or spite, injury to others, sexual passion [or lassitude: kheda], laziness, untruth, anger, bearing a grudge, fear, association with non-Vaiṣṇavas, inequality [i.e., preference of pleasure to pain, etc.], and reliance on others." The commentator Rādhāgovinda Nāth gives no indication of the source of his list.

[17] The term *kavi* means much more in the Indian context than the term "poet" does to us; *kavi* is, to use Krishna Kripalani's word (*Tagore*, New York: Grove Press, 1962; p. 2.), a "seer", incarnate wisdom.

[18] The list is from *CC Madhya Līlā*, 22:45 ff.

[19] *Caitanya-bhāgavata* of Vṛndāvana-dāsa, *Ādilīlā*, II: 86 ff. Vāsulī is a local (Bīrbhūm) name for Caṇḍī; the yakṣas are demigods.

[20] *Narottama-vilāsa* of Narahari-dāsa; Berhampur: Rādhā-ramaṇa Press, 1918; p. 89.

[21] *CC Ādi* 17:32 ff. Bhavānī is also a name for the goddess. Śrīvāsa was the elderly neighbor of Caitanya in whose courtyard many of the Vaiṣṇavas' *kīrtan* parties took place.

[22] The story is movingly told in *CC Antya* 3:94 ff.

[23] *CC Ādi* 17:203-11. *CBh Madhya* 23.

[24] The question of the extent to which the Vaiṣṇavas were persecuted by the Muslims is largely open. There actually seems little reason to believe that Husein Shah was himself violently opposed to them, although his annoyance at having two of his chief officers (Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvamin) defect to follow Caitanya is understandable. It seems, in fact, that except for a few lapses (e.g., the *Caitanya-maṅgal* of Jayānanda, Bāṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad edition, pp. 10,11, where it is said that it had been reported to Husein Shah that a Hindu insurrection was in the wind and that he took rather drastic measures to prevent it), Husein Shah was exceptionally tolerant and that what persecution there was was carried out by local officials such as Haridāsa's tormentor Rāmacandra Khān (who was perhaps himself a converted Hindu).

[25] This is the interpretation of Professor Nirmal Kumar Bose, whose suggestions have in many ways been of great value to me.

[26] *CC Madhya* 6:209 ff. The commentator defines the term *niṣkapāṭa* ("free from delusion or deceit") as "having abandoned Vedic ritualism".

[27] *CC Ādi* 7:74 f.

[28] *Bhakti-ratnākara* of Narahari, Cakravarti; Calcutta: Gauṛiya Maṭh, 1940, 6:57.

[29] *Bhakti-saṃdarbha*, see De, VFM, p. 275.

[30] *CC Ādi* 6:72, *Ādi* 3:47; conversely "taking Kṛṣṇa's name once wipes away all sin" (*CC Ādi* 8:22).

[31] For such divisions among men, see Sir John Woodroffe, *Shakti and Shākta*, Madras: Canesh and Co., 1951; p. 495. The *Bṛhat-tantrasāra* (1:26-28) gives lists of qualities that a man must possess before he can begin his instruction: he must be calm, humble and modest, pure of soul, reverent, intelligent, skillful, of good birth, learned, and of good character.

[32] Sahajiyā-sāhitya, ed. M. M. Basu (University of Calcutta, 1932), *pada* 29, attributed to Locana-dāsa, recognizes three categories corresponding to the three in the Tāntric texts. Other texts have only two.

[33] Pp. 2-3, quoted in M. M. Bose, *The Post-Caitanya Sahajiyā Cult* (University of Calcutta, 1930), pp. 228-29.

[34] *SS*, *pada* 22, attributed to Caṇḍīdāsa.

[35] Ibid., 50, attributed to Caṇḍīdāsa.

[36] Ibid., 21, attributed to Caṇḍīdāsa.

[37] Ibid. There are several variants of the *pada*, one of them reading "he is the most fortunate of all men, and different from all others."

[38] Ibid., 26, attributed to Narahari.

[39] Ibid., 27, attributed to Locana-dāsa.

[40] *Nigūḍhārtha-prakāśāvali* (*SS*, p. 180, n. 1).

[41] *Vivarta-vilāsa* of Akeñcana-dāsa (Calcutta: Tārācānd Das, 1948), p. 79. The first part of the passage is quoted from *CC Madhya* 8:160.

[42] *VV*, p. 91, quoting a pada of Candidasa.

[43] Ibid., p. 74.

[44] See Ānanda-bhairava, in SS p. 147, and Basu's note on the passage.

[45] *Durlabhasāra*, of Locana-dāsa (in Vaiṣṇava-granthāvali, Calcutta: Basumati, 1936), p. 141.

[46] Calcutta University MS 564 pp. 6, 7, and 11, quoted in PCSC, p. 215. The last lines are almost verbatim from the *CC* passage quoted previously. Both passages, however, are based on one of the eight *ślokas* that have come down to us with the name of Caitanya attached. See for example, *CC Antya* 20:55 ff. The eight verses are known as the Śikṣāṣṭaka and appear in various places in the Vaiṣṇava literature, for example in Rūpa Gosvāmin's Pādyāvalī (Dacca University ed. nos. 22,31, 32, 71, 93, 94, 324, and 337, with the signature "Śri-bhagavat"). For a critical discussion of the Śikṣāṣṭaka and the question of their authorship see S. K. De in the IHQ 1934, pp. 310-17.

[47] *CC Antya* 3:13 ff.

[48] *NV*, p. 130.

[49] *SS*, *pada* 27, attributed to Locana-dāsa, says that "the *dharma* of the *sahaja-mānuṣa* is not within the society of men."

[50] Ānanda-bhairava (in *SS*, p. 127), says that "he who is free from attachment to the world looks within himself." Nigūḍhārtha-prakāśāvalī adds that "his actions must be judged good or evil according to his own standard [*svaicchate*]; he must not be judged . . . according to the standards of others" (p. 28).

[51] *Rasaratnasāra*, p. 6 (*PCSC*, p. 215). In *CC Madhya* 8:159, the Sahajiyā Rāmānanda Rāya voices the thought that the true *bhakta* "knows nothing of good or evil".

[52] *VV*, p. 132.

[53] Amrtāsavali in SS, p. 179.

[54] Ibid., pp. 162-63.

[55] *SS*, *pada* 35, attributed to Kṛṣṇadāsa.

[56] Ibid., 38, attributed to Caitanya-dāsa.

[57] Ibid., 24, signed "Kavi-vidyāpati".

SECTION II

STUDIES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND AFTER

ENCOUNTER AND GROWTH IN BENGALI CULTURE

A Survey of Modern Bengali Literature

T. W. Clark

School of Oriental and African Studies

University of London

The aspects of encounter and growth which are brought under focus in this brief survey of Bengali literature in modern period are language, religion, and social and communal attitudes. Language is a difficult instrument to apply to the measurement of culture in Bengal because we know too little of the state of the language which Bengalis spoke in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless it must be admitted that in whatever sphere of life we study the Bengali, he is most naturally, frankly and fully self-expressive in his own tongue. He can be known best in what he wrote in his own language, not in what he wrote in English or in what others have written about him in English. On the subject of religion reference will be made to conflicts within the ranks of the Hindus themselves with regard to their own beliefs and practices, and to the confrontation between Hinduism on the one hand and Islam, Christianity and agnosticism on the other. Consideration of social and communal attitudes will involve some examination of economic opportunities and political change.

In 1800, seven languages were in use somewhere or other in the Calcutta area: Persian, still the language of the law courts and to some extent of government; Arabic, the language of the Islamic scripture; Sanskrit, the language of the Indian scriptures and Brahmanical ritual; Hindustani, including both Urdu and Hindi, the language of certain groups and occupational classes in the metropolis and its hinterland; Portugese, which for years had been the mercantile language and the lingua franca of the eastern seaboard; Bengali, which the majority of the population spoke; and English, the language of the foreign invader. Of these Portugese soon disappeared. Persian was finally deprived of statutory status in 1835, though it had been in decline prior to that date. Arabic and Hindustani still remained, but with limited currency. By 1830 only three languages remained to dispute for the favour of the educated classes, Bengali, Sanskrit and English, though issue between them had been joined over a decade earlier.

At the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the status of Bengali in respect of its literary potentiality was very low. Halhed's assertion in 1783 that it was capable of great literary elegance had fallen on deaf ears. Sanskrit studies on the other hand received great encouragement from the founding of the Asiatic Society of Bengal about the same time. This event marked a turning point, for prior to Plassey Sanskrit had been losing ground to Persian in the esteem of the wealthy and educated classes. The first effective champions of Bengali were William Carey and his missionary colleagues at Serampore. Under Carey's direction original prose writings in Bengali, some of them not without literary merit, began to emerge from the newly founded Fort William College; and in 1818 Marshman published the first influential Bengali newspaper, the *Samācār Darpan*. In 1815 and 1816 Ram Mohan Ray, now regarded by some critics as the father of Bengali prose, wrote two religious works in Bengali, *Vedāntagranth* and *Vedāntāsar*. They are written in a turgid, difficult style; but they are historically important because they were written in Bengali by an acknowledged scholar. There was however strong resentment on the part of certain paṇḍits to what they considered to be a usurpation of literary status by Bengali. In their view Sanskrit was par excellence the language of literature. Bengali was only a spoken vernacular. When it became obvious that the tide of history was turning against them, the paṇḍits shifted their ground and tried to insist that all works in Bengali should before publication be submitted to them for correction in accordance with the rules of Sanskrit grammar. Ram Mohan, whether as a deliberate riposte or not we do not know, countered by writing a grammar of the Bengali language. Nevertheless the paṇḍits had made their point, and in consequence a literary dialect of Bengali came into existence. It was known later as *sābhu bhāṣā* was purged of the so-called vulgarities of the colloquial language, which Carey and his advisors had countenanced, and also of vocabulary elements of Perso-Arabic origin, even though many of these had been naturalised over several centuries. The merit of Bengali works was assessed according to the preponderance in them of Sanskrit words, *tatsamas* and new borrowings, and by their skill in employing those syntactical compounds known in Sanskrit as *samās*. Longer verbal and pronominal forms were preferred to the shorter forms which were current in the spoken language. *Sādhu bhāṣā* became in its extreme form an esoteric jargon comprehensible only to scholars of Sanskrit, and far removed from the language of speech.

The cleavage between this literary Sanskrit dialect and the language which was in general use at the time faced newspaper editors with a difficult choice. *Sādhu bhāṣā*, because of its unfamiliar vocabulary and ponderous syntax, was not easily understood by the ordinary reader to whom their papers were addressed; and in consequence they had to find a *media via*, which turned out to be neither *sādhu bhāṣā* nor the spoken vernacular, or *calit bhāṣā* as it came to be called, but what Bankimcandra fifty years afterwards called the middle style. This conflict of styles may have contributed to the tardy progress of prose writing in the first half of the century and have added a further reason for the popularity of English. After 1850 there are indications that Bengali authors were beginning to arrive at a compromise; but, and this is important, the compromise did not appeal to certain elements in the Muslim community, who had already begun to go their own way. The removal by the Sanskritists of words of Perso-Arabic origin in the Bengali vocabulary and their replacement by

Sanskrit neologisms offended them and prompted them to increase the number of Perso-Arabic words in their own writings. They set up their own press, the Battala Press in Calcutta, which by the "40's" was issuing a considerable number of books of various kinds, some of which were in their vocabulary as far removed from colloquial Bengali as was the extreme *sādhu bhāṣā* of the Sanskritists. Some publishers went to the extent of printing from the end of the book; while others printed in the Urdu script, though this latter venture did not prove popular. In the year 1854, the mixed dialect thus evolved was named Musalman Bengali by James Long.

Meanwhile, as far as one can tell, the ordinary Bengalis, Hindus and Muslims, went on speaking a language which was the natural heir to what, as I pointed out in my first paper, Bharatcandra Rāy had called *yabanī miśal bhāṣā*, which was neither *sādhu bhāṣā* nor "Musalman Bengali" of the type that was being uttered by the Battala Press. It should, however, be noted that there were a number of Muslim authors whose language, in respect of vocabulary and syntax, is little different from the middle style of Bankimcandra. The conflict was between the extremists on both sides, and the bulk of the population of Bengal remained unaffected by their linguistic immoderation. Nevertheless a sense of grievance had been created in the hearts of some of the Muslim community, and this increased with time.

Much of the literary history of Bengal from 1820 onwards as far as 1860, and indeed later than that, belongs to the newspaper. Even in our own generation novels etc. find their way into print first in the pages of newspapers or periodical journals. In the 1820's however, newspapers were new. Their editors were more concerned with the business of survival than with the literary merit of what they printed. Success depended upon sales, and sales on popular demand. To achieve popularity editors had to ensure that they were publishing in language their clientele wanted to read; and because this matter was then in doubt they were forced to experiment. The first paper, *Samācār Darpan*, was initially a Bengali publication. Later it became bi-lingual, with English as well as Bengali. Other papers experimented with these and other languages. One went so far as to attempt a four-language publication, with English, Bengali, Persian and Hindi in parallel columns. One paper came out in Urdu, but without success, so it switched to Urdu and Persian, and eventually had to drop Urdu altogether. There were Urdu speakers in Calcutta, but obviously they were not numerous enough to support a paper in their language. The overall situation was one of a competition between the various languages to secure popular favour. The upshot was clearly in favour of Bengali and English, which from the "30's" had the field more or less to themselves.

The newspapers contain a wealth of information about the religious, social and economic life of the metropolis, information which must be included in any history of the period which aims at a true balance of ideas.

The *Sambād Prabhākar*, first published in 1832 by Iśvarcandra Gupta, was the first really influential Bengali newspaper. It was in many ways the mirror of popular taste and current opinion, much of which it inspired and fostered. Gupta himself was a writer and a scholar. It was he who awakened in Calcutta an interest in medieval literature. The papers of the "20's" suggest that the majority of the citizens of Calcutta did not know, or had forgotten, that Bengal had a medieval literature; and so complete at the time was the barrier between the city, with its new culture, and the countryside, with the old, that the rural kaviwālās, the heirs of the old bards, or the traditional yātrā plays which still delighted village audiences were either unknown or despised in the metropolis where tastes were being moulded by more sophisticated forms of entertainment. Gupta published biographies of some of the medieval poets, and in so doing established a contact between Calcutta's present and Bengal's past. Interest in the past which was to become a cardinal feature of much of the writing of the later decades of the century was increased by the work of some of Gupta's young assistants who read with enthusiasm, and were inspired in their own work to draw upon, Tod's Annals of Rajasthan, with their tales of Indian heroes. Here was the fons et origo of the Bengali passion for hero worship, which is usually associated with the name of Bankimcandra, but which actually began to stir Bengali hearts in poems published in Sambād Prabhākar. Tales from the Sanskrit epics were also told, most ably by Vidyasagar, who later created a great story by his advocacy of widow marriage and female education. Yet interest was by no means confined to tales drawn from India's past. The Bengali reader was avid for information, past, present and future, foreign or domestic. This was the time when stories from England and the west were being read with consuming enthusiasm. Two letters to the editor of the Samācār Darpan reveal how his readers were turning more and more to the newspaper for information of the world outside. In 1820 one reader wrote that he would stop taking the paper if so much foreign matter continued to be published. In 1839, another wrote that what made his paper of such interest to him was the overseas information it contained.

This, however, is only one side of the medal. The tastes of many during the "30's" and "40's", indeed later too, were not satisfied by the reading matter that was available in Bengali, and said so in no uncertain terms. "If there were anything in Bengali worth reading I would read it, but there isn't." The educated elite preferred to read English in which they were now fully proficient. Many of them still despised Bengali as a literary language. As early as 1828 a young man wrote to the Samācār Darpan that he knew English better than Bengali and preferred to write in it. This was clearly not simply a matter of preferring one language to another. Career and economic considerations were doing much to mould taste, for English was the avenue to profitable employment. Up-and-coming young men spoke it at work, and continued to do so outside to show their superiority to their fellow citizens who could talk Bengali only, a social phenomon which continued well into the present century, if indeed it is completely dead now. Young Hindus had from the beginning of the century shown themselves increasingly eager to take the opportunities which were being created to learn English and absorb the European culture it brought with it. Muslims on the other hand, possibly for religious reasons, were reluctant to seize these opportunities, and in consequence far fewer of them achieved proficiency in the language in comparison with the Hindus.

Thus proficiency in English tended to become yet another divisive influence between the communities.

Round about 1860, for a complex of reasons which has not yet been adequately analysed, the attitude of Bengalis to their own language and matter written in it began to change, at first slowly, but soon with gathering speed. Vidyasagar's works won considerable admiration. Rangalal Banerji wrote a number of stirring ballads on subjects drawn from Tod's *Annals*, the theme being heroism and the emotion patriotism. Pyaricand Mitra's novel *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* which was published serially in a monthly periodical *Māsik* created a great furore. Michael Madhusudan Datta, whose first compositions were in English, returned to Bengali in his dramatic and poetic works. He explained his reasons for returning to his mother tongue in a poem entitled *Āmār Dés* (My Country), a patriotic outpouring which soon found a place in school readers and which generations of Bengali children have changed with fervent glee. The years 1858 to 1865 were years of remarkable output, culminating in Bankimcandra's first novel, *Durgeśnandinī*. It seemed now to have been proven that Bengali was a literary language, yet Bankimcandra was not satisfied. In 1872, he published his paper *Baṅga Darśan*, in the first editorial of which he chided his fellow-countrymen for not reading Bengali. It was the purpose of his new publication, he informed them, to provide reading matter in Bengali which would satisfy the tastes of all. In four years he discontinued publication, claiming with a pride which even Landor's superb epigram can hardly surpass, that he had accomplished his object. Thus in 80 years Bengali had advanced from "barbaric" status to a condition in which it was ready for the pen of Rabindranath; and Halhed's century-old dictum about its literary potentiality had been amply vindicated.

It is difficult to trace in detail, and at every stage, the revival of Hinduism which is one of the most important factors in the nationalistic campaigns of later years, because so much religious teaching and so many religious pressures tend to be exercised privately, and their strength cannot therefore be known or assessed until they emerge from the secret places of men's hearts in times of overt crisis. For this reason we know more about attacks on Hinduism than we do about how the Hindus organized in self-defense first, and then for counter-attack as their strength increased.

The first significant encounter between Christians and Hindus occurred in the early days of Fort William College, when a British professor named Gilchrist proposed a subject for a dissertation to which Mrtyunjay, one of Carey's Brahman advisors, took exception on religious grounds. The government supported Mrtyunjay, and Gilchrist was obliged to retire. Thus overt attacks on Hinduism would seem for the moment to have been ruled inadmissible. In the meantime, however, missionary schools were being opened in many places in and around Calcutta. There were over 200 of them in 1812. There can be doubt that the Bengali children who flocked in great numbers to these schools were subjected albeit indirectly to some form of Christian doctrinal and ethical teaching. Hindu fathers did not object, being willing, it would seem, to accept this risk to obtain education for their sons. Muslim parents on the other hand were less willing, and in consequence their sons began to fall behind in the race for education. The missionaries, however, would not be silenced, and in spite of government policy that indigenous religion and culture must not be interfered with, they began to launch attacks on some of the practices and beliefs of the Hindus, particularly on *satī* and polytheism. A similar attack came from within the ranks of the Hindus themselves. Ram Mohan Ray, himself a Brahman, condemned polytheism as being opposed to the teaching of scripture; and on the subject of *satī* he was as antagonistic as the missionaries. His studies of the *Vedānta* culminated in his preaching a monistic creed, which in some ways resembles the Unitarian profession in western countries. In 1817, the Hindu College was opened in Calcutta as a private venture with prominent Indians among its sponsors. In spite of its name the Hindu College had nothing to do with the propagation of Hinduism. Its policy was quite the reverse. It offered a western curriculum taught exclusively through the medium of English. Its alumni soon made the acquaintance of European radicals and agnostics. Free-thinking became the order of the day, and many students were regarded as atheists by the orthodox. Thus there developed a three-fold assault on the ancient citadel, from the Christian missionaries, from the Brahmo Samaj, as Ram Mohan's sect came to be called, and from the new agnostic elite.

The Hindu paṇḍits seemed to have but one ally, the government, which in 1824 produced funds for the establishment of a Sanskrit College in Calcutta. The college authorities made no concession to recent changes of opinion. They proposed and carried through a completely orthodox syllabus, consisting of logic, rhetoric, grammar, etc., all taught through the medium of Sanskrit. Ayurvedic medicine was added a little later. There was some support also for the orthodox cause in the press, notably in the columns of the *Samācār Candrikā*, which was published in 1822 by Bhavanicaran Bhattacarya as a counterblast to the heterodox teaching of Ram Mohan Ray in the *Sambād Kaumudī*, published first the year before. The foundation of the Sanskrit College was a great encouragement to the orthodox party. They achieved a signal victory almost at once by compelling the removal from the staff of the Hindu College of one of its most brilliant and popular teachers, the young Derozio, on the ground that he was corrupting the minds of his students. The case for the adoption of Sanskrit as the language of education was pressed hard, and at one time it seemed likely that it would be preferred by the Education Department to English as demanded by the new elite. Macaulay's Minute of 1833, however, decided the issue in favour of English, and the case for Sanskrit was lost. The cause of the orthodox party received a set-back and for a time seemed to be on the decline. The numbers of converts to Christianity increased, and though there were protests the opposition was sporadic and not very effective. Debendranath Tagore, on whom the mantle of Ram Mohan Ray had fallen as leader of the Brahmo Samaj, attempted to draw children away from the missionary schools by opening one of his own; but the venture failed. Debendranath condemned proselytisation by the Christians but he was equally opposed to current Hindu practice. He openly rejected the caste system and refused to participate in the principal Hindu festivals, to the distress of his relatives and friends. It is to be doubted, however, whether his influence extended far beyond the small circle of middle-class who assembled to hear his eloquent addresses. His newspaper, the *Tattvabodhinī Patrikā*, was widely read, it is true, but possibly more on account of Aksaykumar Datta's articles on general subjects than for its religious teaching. Meantime the anti-Hindu cause progressed. *Satī* was abolished by law, and Vidyasagar, a Brahman and one of the most respected writers of the 1850's, campaigned for the removal of the ban on widow marriage and the opening of educational facilities to girls. The articles from so powerful a pen caused resentment, but it showed itself rather in attempts to belittle Vidyasagar's reputation as a writer than in refutation of his arguments. Bankimcandra, the thermometer of Hindu feelings, made several caustic references to him, and was generally significantly faint in his praise. Agnosticism was still strong among the educated middle-class. Michael Madhusudan Datta became a Christian, and when he lapsed it was rather into free-thinking than a return to Hinduism. He castigated the orthodox attitudes of the Sanskritists to Bengali literature, and in his Ramayanic poem, *Meghnādbadhkāvya*, deliberately sought a *renversement* of values by making Ram and Laksman the villains of his story. "I hate Ram and his rabble", he wrote a friend in English. Protests were made, but rather on the grounds of contravention of the laws of Sanskrit poetics than because the work was offensive to religious susceptibilities. Calcutta society was not noticeably perturbed by his scandalous presentation of the incarnated deity.

Nevertheless, in spite of the battering it received from a variety of foes, the inner bastion of Hinduism was not breached. The orthodox party was still strong. What it needed was a voice. This Bankimcandra Chatterji supplied, in his articles and in his novels. In his *Kṛṣṇacaritra* he openly attacked Christian theology, by making comparisons between Krishna and Christ, in which the advantage was always with Krishna. In his novels he implied opposition to Vidyasagar's argument in support of widow marriage and female education, by extolling the virtues of the orthodox Hindu wife, e.g. *Debīcaudhurānī*, and exposing the degradation which can follow a widow's attempt to seduce a married man, e.g. *Kṛṣṇakānter Uil*. As a controversialist Bankimcandra was not consistent. For all his arguments in support of Krishna's claim to be the god of the Hindus, it was *Kālī* whom he extolled as the goddess of the Hindus, especially in his later novels, e.g. *Ānanda Maṭh* and *Sītārām*. *Bande Mātāram*, his hymn to *Kālī*, became the slogan of the early nationalist movement; and when, early in the present century, Arobindo proclaimed it the *mantra* of the struggle for independence, Hinduism became equated with Nationalism as different aspects of the same cause.

Calcutta in 1800 was a comparatively new city. Its citizens had been drawn from the Bengal countryside and towns, some from further afield, by the promise of prosperity; and the stream of migrants had been augmented as a result of the catastrophic famine of 1770, which decimated thousands of rural communities. Once the migrants arrived, the past was soon forgotten and a new life in a new society begun. They were offered education for their children, first in the missionary schools, and then in the Hindu College. For the young, opportunities of careers in the service of the East India Company and in the new business houses proliferated, provided they could qualify; and one of the qualifications seemed to be the adoption of western modes of life and the new western language. Habits of life, clothing and food were changed in imitation of the practice of the British residents. By the 1820's a new educated middle-class had emerged. It was talking English, wearing English clothes, eating English food and behaving for all the world as if it was English. Older people were disturbed by the manners of the young, and some of them were critical. In the *Samācār Darpan* in 1821, there appeared the first satire on this emergent class, the new Babus, as they were called. Two years later the editor of the *Samācār Candrikā* wrote two other satires on the same theme, *Naba Bābu Bilās*, on the modern young woman. The young, however, were not deterred. They pressed on with their learning of English, and revelled in the culture of the Brave New World that the knowledge of English opened up for them. They read voraciously, poetry, philosophy and history; and so doing they constructed for themselves a new standard of values. Nothing was immune from criticism and investigation. At first they applied these new values to an assessment of their own religion and culture, and apparently found both wanting. They were ready to experiment. Some were converted to Christianity, others to the Brahmo Samaj. Many remained Hindu but in name only, having little belief in, or respect for, its teaching and its practices.

In the "40's" and "50's" a change of attitude can be sensed. Criticism began to be levelled against the British government, the operation of British justice and the methods of British industrial and commercial enterprises. This may in part have been caused by disappointment that professional and economic advancement had not been as rapid as had been hoped for; but it was also associated with stirrings of patriotic sentiment. There was an increased regard for the greatness of India's past, its heroes and its literature. Rangalal Banerji's patriotic verses were becoming popular; and in time it began to be felt that conversion to Christianity was unpatriotic.

Between 1858 and 1862 there appeared three works of considerable social significance: *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl*, a lampoon of the *nouveau riche*; *Nildarpan*, a drama the substance of which is a bitter exposure of the behaviour of some of the indigo planters, which was fast becoming a public scandal; and *Hutom Pĕcār Naksā*, a clever but realistic satire on Calcutta society generally. *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* pilloried society's spoilt young men and their parents who were unable or unwilling to discipline them. It also fired an early shot in the war against indigo planters and zemindars. Less than just, however, was the ridicule it poured on the Bengali Muslim in the person of *Ṭhak Cācā*, an unscrupulous Muslim lawyer who spoke an absurd mixture of Bengali and Urdu. Significant too is the fact that it called into question the fairness of the British legal system, affirming that in practice there was one law for the rich and one for the poor. The play *Nildarpan* created a sensation. It was translated into English by the missionary James Long, and so incensed were the authorities that he was fined Rs. 1,000 and jailed for a month. This treatment made a mrtyr of him, and his fine was paid for him by one of Calcutta's leading citizens, the author, in fact, of *Hutom Pĕcār Naksā*, though at the time his pseudonym had not been penetrated. This last book is important for several reasons. It is the first work which was wholly written in the colloquial style of Bengali. It contains some vivid descriptions of Calcutta, the life in its streets and the vicious way of life into which some of its wealthy young men had fallen. Behind its pungent satire lies a moral purpose, the implication that it is not good for people to abandon the customs of their own country. Particularly illuminating too are the short snippets of local gossip the book contains. They cover many subjects, including references to the Sepoy Mutiny, and conversions to Christianity. Hutom Pĕcār Naksā suggests that Bengali society was beginning to arrive at a synthesis of the old and the new, the Indian and the western. A new intellectual and moral maturity was becoming discernible.

The Muslims played little part in all this intellectual and sentimental activity. They had various religious movements it is true, but these were on the whole conservative and within the body of the community. There is no reference to them in the literary works I have mentioned. The Muslims, or any rate the great majority of them, had missed the educational opportunities which the new society had generated, and had fallen so far behind their Hindu fellow-countrymen that there seemed little chance for the time being of their catching up. They had their own literature, but apart from a few authors like Maśarraf Hosen it was for the edification of the faithful only. It consisted in the main of tedious homilies on doctrinal and behavioural subjects, of little literary merit and of no interest to anyone outside their own ranks. I get the feeling that many of the Muslims had for the most part withdrawn into a backwater, while the main stream of modern life swept by. Naturally they were worried about their plight. They were irritated and frustrated. The attitude of some Hindus did not make things better. Some Hindu authors ridiculed and denigrated them: and of these Bankimcandra was the most important. His treatment of the Muslim characters and his opinions of the community as a whole, as presented in his later novels, produce strong resentment, which has not been forgotten, even today. The anxiety of the community about their present condition and future prospects was such that they formed a political association to defend their rights and represent their cause. It was in existence before 1885, the year in which the Indian Congress came into being. Yet there was not complete unity of culture and purpose within the community. I suspect that there was a cleavage between the Bengali Muslims on the one hand and the small Urdu-speaking minority on the other, on social and cultural as well as on ethnic and linguistic lines. The Hindus now had leaders and an influential and educated middle-class: and they were beginning to close their ranks. The Muslims had fewer leaders, some whom were not, and did not speak, Bengali: and as yet they had no middle-class of any magnitude. We need, however, to know more than we do about the Muslim community in the nineteenth century, its opinions and its aspirations: and this will not be possible without an intensive study of the works of their own writers, and the offering of the findings of such a study to scholars of other disciplines for further consideration.

STUDY IV: COMMUNAL ATTITUDES IN THE NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURIES

Rachel R. Van Meter

University of Minnesota

The great political, and ultimately social, fact of twentieth century Bengal is the partition of the area, first into the provinces of East and West Bengal, and finally into portions of two entirely independent states: India and Pakistan. The forces leading to the final cataclysmic division in 1947 were political, social and religious, and their beginnings are to be traced well back into the nineteenth century. There is an abundance of documentary material covering the development of the various movements and organizations concerned with communalism and independence, two closely related areas of activity. But the reports, the minutes of meetings, the copies of speeches, the variety of records, which go to make up this material, are but the evidence of formal actions growing out of the more elusive, underlying facts of communal allegiances, emotions, and aspirations on the part of individual Bengalis. These, indeed, are the facts which, in the end, determine the direction and success of a movement, and these facts are reflected only in shadowy image in the records which comprise primary source material.

It is to the literature that we must turn for some indication of the attitudes and every day practices within the two great communities, Hindu and Muslim, that were the chief contenders in the events which led to Partition. Even here, we can admit to limited success only, for a work of literature is, after all, the expression of one individual's response to society. It is true that he has been molded by his society, and he is continually influenced by it. But his writing remains the work of an individual and is therefore unique; it can make no claim to absolute truth. He is, furthermore, a craftsman whose art permits him free use of imagination and, more restrainedly, exaggeration to weave his tale and make his point.

On the other side of the coin, it may be observed that few authors, if any, express views or reflect sentiments on the broader aspects of a given situation which are not in harmony with some segments of their community, whether great or small. The claim that any one author is a "lone voice" in his generation is often extravagant. A piece of literature dealing with a major political, social or religious theme, it seems to me, will provide us with a certain insight into the thoughts of some individuals in a community at a given time.

The two major communities involved in the struggle for political independence in South Asia produced a considerable literature, the greater portion of which was written in Bengali. A complete study of that literature with regard to communal attitudes alone would fill a large volume and reveal a great variety of feeling. The scope of this paper will permit only a limited sampling of the literature. Moreover, in the interest of a unified and cohesive approach to the subject, I have selected literary works belonging to only one of the communities, being fully aware that there is another half to the story and that it merits investigation.

Specifically, I propose to discuss three works written by three Hindu authors at three different points in the modern era. The three works address themselves to the subject under consideration, but each must be evaluated in the light of the time of its composition and the particular relationship of the author to his society. The three authors, in different ways, have made major contributions to Bengali literature; two of them are very famous.

The first of the three texts is *Rājā Pratāpādityacaritra* written by Rām Rām Basu in 1801. The exact date of Basu's birth is unknown, but it appears that he was born in 1757, the year of the Battle of Plassey.[1] By the time Rām Rām Basu had reached manhood, the British authority in Bengal was well established, but the memory of the Muslim Nawab and his administration was still fresh. Persian continued as the language of the courts. We may assume that, for the most part, social attitudes of the earlier era still lingered during the formative years of Basu's life. Nevertheless, his life was entwined with those of certain members of the British community, notably the great missionary and scholar, William Carey, from 1787 until his death in 1813.[2] It was a period untouched by the problems of modern democracy and the tensions of communalism.

We cannot, by any measure, think of Basu as a completely representative member of his community. In our time, we should have labeled him "non-conformist"; i.e., on all points except one, and this one point is of vital importance. He maintained unwavering allegiance to his caste, the sole fact, evidently, which kept him from converting to Christianity. A Bangaj Kāýastha,[3] he wrote to an interested clergyman in England, "I understood something of the gospel and can make it known a little to others; but cannot leave my *caste*. This is my great difficulty."[4] Yet he was willing to mingle with foreigners, and he took a very liberal position with regard to his own religion. Long before the tracts of Rāmmohan Rāý, Rām Rām Basu had published works denouncing image-worship.[5] Some of his statements show a faith akin to that later expounded by the Brahmo-Samājists.[6] He was, furthermore, a fervent and vocal opponent of Brahmans.[7]

In private life, Basu was less than conventional. We know that he was married and had children.[8] Yet the three years of his later life in which he did not work with Carey (1797-1800), came as a result of his dismissal following the discovery of his liaison with a young widow and the birth and murder of their child.[9]

Several years later, after his reinstatement in Carey's employ, he wrote the book Rājā Pratāpādityacaritra as a textbook for the Bengali department of the College of Fort William in which he held the post of Pandit. The book is ample proof of the estimate of his contemporaries naming him one of the foremost Bengali scholars of his time.[10] A discussion of the literary and linguistic merits of the work lies outside the scope of this study. Suffice it to say, they were considerable.

For a long time, the book was regarded as a work of history. It can no longer be admitted unreservedly to that category.[11] It is, rather, a story based partly on fact and partly on hearsay. It concerns the life and accomplishments of the sixteenth century Bengali king Pratāpāditya whose kingdom was at Dhūmghāṭ in Jessore district. Basu's sources were Persian court records and the legends handed down through generations of his family who were the same caste and sub-caste as Pratāpāditya.[12] Unquestionably, some portions were invented by Basu to improve the tale.

The story opens with the arrival of Pratāpāditya's grandfather in Gauṛ, capital of the Muslim Nawab of Bengal. Through his grandfather's careful strategy, his sons became playmates and bosom friends of the Nawab's son, Dāud. Later when Dāud ascended the throne, he kept a childhood promise by naming the two Hindu boys to the highest posts in his government. To the one, he gave the title Rājā Basanta Rāẏ, to the other, his prime minister, the title Mahārājā Bikramāditya. The latter was the father of Pratāpāditya. When the astute Bikramāditya realized that Dāud's political position would eventually be threatened through his deteriorating relationship with the Moghul court at Delhi, he secured the grant of a huge tract of land in a remote portion of southern Jessore District and quietly built a large residence there for his own family and that of his brother. With the ascendency of Akbar, Dāud was forced to defend his capital and later to flee for his life. While he hid in the mountains, the brothers moved their household and much of the wealth of Dāud's capital to their estate in Jessore. Later they were able to make terms with the new regime and retain their "kingdom" as well as high posts in the new provincial government. Dāud, however, was foully murdered by the representatives of Akbar.

In the meantime Bikramāditya built up his kingdom and after several years he was assured a successor by the birth of his son, Pratāpāditya. The boy was carefully reared and educated. Later he was sent off to represent the kingdom at the court in Delhi. After several years he returned to Jessore to become king of Dhūmghāṭ. The story, as indicated by this exceedingly brief outline, is centered around the relationship between Hindus and Muslims at both the political and social levels.

Although the plot for the story is furnished by certain historical events in the sixteenth century, the style of the narrative leads us to believe that the attitudes and views described by the authors were contemporary, and that he had interpreted the story of Pratāpāditya in the light of his own view of society. That interpretation contains several fascinating aspects.

The most striking fact of the book from the point of view of our subject is the almost total lack of evidence of Hindu-Muslim tension. The word "Muslim" rarely occurs in the text. The word "Hendu" is to be found only slightly more frequently. In only two or three instances are the characters identified as Hindu or Muslim. In the early pages of the book, we are given the picture of a very robust friendship between two Hindu boys and a Muslim prince. To this friendship the three remained steadfastly loyal to the end. It is not clear in the account whether Dāud was murdered by Hindu or Muslim princes acting on behalf of the Emperor.

The account of Pratāpāditya's residence in the court at Delhi gives us the picture of a young Hindu prince being treated in precisely the same way as all others in the court. When he distinguished himself as a gifted musician and poet, he was suitably rewarded by the Emperor.

At no time is the question of taboos raised in the story. No reference of even a subtle nature is made to partaking of food, inter-marriage between the groups, or, in fact, differences of religious custom. In only two instances do we find Muslim characters making somewhat critical statements against Hindus. Dāud's khānsama, for example, urged Dāud not to wait any longer for word from Bikramāditya while in hiding, but rather to reveal himself to Akbar's men and to endeavor to make a deal with them. In his effort to persuade Dāud, he said, "They [Bikramāditya and Basanta Rāý] are Hindus; they have very corrupt characters. If they get a position of authority for themselves, what do they care for other people?"[13]

Communal identification, however, is by no means absent from the book. To the contrary, it is a very strong factor in the story. It is simply that the Muslim community and the Hindu community in general are not involved. The important consideration in Rām Rām Basu's work is caste affiliation. Being Muslim or Hindu is of little consequence; being a Baṅgaj Kāýastha is everything. Basu identifies Pratāpāditya as a Baṅgaj Kāýastha in the opening paragraph of the book and also himself as being of the same caste and sub-caste. The reference to caste occurs often throughout the book. At one point Basanta Rāý appealed to Bikramāditya to send out reliable scouts through East Bengal to bring Baṅgaj Kāýasthas of good reputation with their families to settle in Dhūmghāṭ, because Basanta Rāý was feeling very lonely for his own caste. Bikramāditya did just that. After establishing a large Baṅgaj Kāýastha community in Dhūmghāṭ, he launched a great welfare program including education for all children, jobs for the unemployed, pensions for the poor and the elderly. Twentieth century Americans may be reminded of the maxim which says that there is nothing new under the sun by reading Basu's final comment on Bikramāditya's social welfare program: mahā samāj haila — A great society came into being![14] The

The book ends with a long summary of the service that had been done to the Baṅgaj Kāyasthas in the kingdom of Bikramāditya and Pratāpāditya.[15]

Basu's unselfconscious indifference to the issue of Hindu community vs. Muslim community is rarely seen again in any of the subsequent literature. By the time the second of our three texts was published, the political climate of the country and the accompanying social attitudes had changed drastically. In 1887 the novel *Sītārām* appeared. It was the last of the novels of Baṅkimcandra Chatterji, whose literary works were concerned, in most instances, with communalism.

Between Basu's *Rājā Pratāpādityacaritra* and Bankim's *Sītārām*, the lines had been drawn between the two communities on such issues as western education and objectives of nationalism. The mutiny had taken place the year before Baṅkim was graduated from college. Not only were people very conscious of group exclusiveness, but they readily acknowledged and supported inter-community hostility. In view of the temper of the times and his own orthodox heritage, it is doubtful that Baṅkimcandra, a *kulin* Brahman, could have taken any other position than he did.

The facts of Baṅkimcandra's public life are uncomplicated. The son of a well-to-do family, he was educated at Hooghly and Presidency Colleges. He served the British administration as deputy collector and deputy district magistrate throughout his entire professional career. Far less is known of his private life. We know that he came from an orthodox Brahman home, he was married, and he had three daughters.[16] Beyond that little is known. It seems probable that his private life followed the conventions of his society.

Muslim characters exist in profusion in Baṅkimcandra's novels, and in the earlier works they are often treated sympathetically. We do not know what incident or influence overbalanced Baṅkimcandra's position with regard to the Muslim community, but beginning with the novel *Rājsiṁha* an enormous alteration of his expressed attitude is clearly observable. The particularly unfortunate novel *Ānandamaṭh* is filled with unrelieved venom directed toward the Muslim community.

I have arbitrarily selected *Sītārām* from among the later novels as a text for our consideration. From the artistic point of view, it is not among Baṅkimcandra's best works, and its meaning in certain areas seems extremely complex. Yet its center of focus is the great theme of Baṅkim's later works; namely, Hindu nationalism. In connection with this emphasis on communal identification, the author's extreme hostility toward Muslims and deep veneration of Brahmans are well illustrated. In addition, the strangely paradoxical posture he was capable of assuming is fully demonstrated.

The hero of the novel, a Hindu prince named Sītārām, is, in fact, a historical character, who, at the end of the seventeenth century founded a capital city which he shrewdly named Mohammedpur. He engaged in conflict with Muslim generals on several occasions. Around these few historical facts, Baṅkimcandra wove a tale which in reality illustrated his views with regard to the relationship of the two communities and the proper course of action for the Hindu community. Śrī, the estranged wife of Sītārām, and heroine of the story, is the prime mover in the plot. By enlisting Sītārām's help in rescuing her brother from a Muslim prison, she placed Sītārām in a position of open rebellion against Muslim rule. After his initial victory over Muslim forces, Sītārām was persuaded by his religious preceptor, a Brahman named Candrācūṛ, to establish a Hindu capital which would become a refuge for Hindus living under Muslim oppression. Sītārām founded his city, and it became a model of good administration and public welfare. Sītārām, from the first, was careful to maintain the proper relationship with the Emperor at Delhi as well as with Muslim society in general in order to live in peace and prosperity. Muslim generals, however, became jealous at seeing the Hindus flourishing. They launched an attack in which Śrī appeared on the scene once more to become the key element in the Hindu victory. Nevertheless, Śrī refused to live with Sītārām and to take her rightful place as queen, as a result of which Sītārām became indifferent to his responsibilities and his kingdom entered a state of decline. While Śrī wandered about as a sannyāsinī, Sītārām permitted his administration to deteriorate to a point where internal rebellion was threatened. Although Śrī returned a few times during crisis to render momentary aid, the kingdom finally collapsed.

In this novel, as in others, Baṅkimcandra writes of two communities set in direct opposition to each other. They have nothing in common. While the action is carried on mainly at the political level, the author presents numerous religious and social arguments to support his position of hostility. The political line is obvious: Hindus should rule themselves. They can never live in happiness, he argues, under a regime of such contrasting culture. The cultural differences described by Bankimcandra were presented by him as fundamental and unreconcilable from the Hindu point of view: Muslims hate Hindus,[17] they hate the gods,[18] they hate the Hindu religion,[19] they eat beef.[20] Moreover, they were shown to be excessively cruel: they were capable of killing women and children.[21] They exercised unrelenting oppression over their Hindu subjects. The Hindu opposition to such authority, was, therefore, a holy cause. The emotional atmosphere was set in the early pages of the book where Śrī cried out to the Hindus fighting against Muslim soldiers: "Kill the Muslims! . . . Kill the enemy, the enemy of the Hindus, the enemy of the gods, my enemy! . . . Kill!"[22]

Sītārām is shown to be righteous in all respects because he built the city as a refuge for Hindus and for the Hindu religion. Furthermore, he made every effort to meet the requirements of the Moghul court and to establish a peaceful relationship with the Muslim authority. In this connection Baṅkimcandra introduced a rather astounding element into his history. A Muslim fakir by the name of Cād Śāh began attending Sītārām's council. Sītārām became very fond of this learned and pious man and accepted his advice on maintaining good relations with the Muslim government; and he made the fakir a sort of good will ambassador between the two communities.[23] The fakir embodies all that is opposite to everything else Baṅkimcandra has to say about Muslims in the novel. He was also a true and respected friend of the Brahman, Candrācūṛ, and he was shown to be equally righteous. Both he and Candrācūṛ were forced to leave Sītārām's kingdom during its final decline because of the corruption and depravity that existed in it.

A final and strong point connected with communal attitudes is made by Baṅkimcandra in the novel. The idea of Brahmism as a valuable social and political element in Bengali society is presented in the character of Candrācūṛ. In the days of Sītārām's great success, Candrācūṛ was the highest authority in the kingdom. Sītārām conducted the affairs of state under his direction. When Sītārām ceased to hear Candrācūṛ's advice, the kingdom went into decline, and Candrācūṛ was left with no alternative but to cease his efforts.

The blend of traditional Hindu exclusiveness and extreme anti-Muslim sentiment had reached a high point in Baṅkim's literature. Within a few decades, the voice of moderation was to be heard, but before its appearance the province had been divided and the die cast for the cleavage which was to mature in 1947.

In 1913, eight years after the first partition of Bengal, Śaratcandra Chatterji published his first story.[24] He was thirty-three years old, and he was employed as an office clerk in Rangoon.[25] Although a Brahman by birth, life had been difficult for Śaratcandra. He was from a poor home, and his educational opportunities had been limited. From the beginning, however, his stories caught the attention of the Bengali people. We can judge to a degree the measure in which they were eager to hear what Śaratcandra had to say by the fact that he was the first author in the modern period who was able to live entirely from the income his writing brought him.[26]

His novels and short stories dealt with social themes, and his comment on society was almost startling in his day. His works point a finger of accusation at the hypocricies and deceptions guarded and perpetuated by the conventions of society. His own life seems to have been less conventional. Some accounts tell us that he was a bachelor. Others claim that he was, in fact, married to the woman with whom he lived.[27]

Two main features of Śaratcandra's position on communalism are to be noted: (1) a strong anti-Brahmanism; (2) a revulsion at what he considered the grotesque treatment of Muslims by Hindus. But Śaratcandra was not the moralizer Baṅkimcandra was. His approach was more subtle, and hence the impact was much more powerful. His techniques, as applied to this particular theme, are illustrated in the short story Maheś, which addressed itself specifically to the problem of Hindu-Muslim relations at the social level.

Maheś, which appeared in 1921, is the story of a wretched, starving Muslim peasant, Gaphur Miñā, his motherless daughter, Āminā, and his forlorn and bony bull, Maheś. Gaphur lived in a Hindu village and the opening scene vividly portrays Gaphur's position in the village. The local Brahman, on his way home from a pūjā at the zamindar's house, demanded that the fever-ridden Gaphur come out of his miserable hut for an interrogation concerning his care of Maheś. The Brahman poured out a volume of abuse on the Muslim and threatened him with extreme punishment if the animal died at his hands. He reminded Gaphur that he was living in a Hindu kingdom whose zamindar was not a simple, easy going Hindu, but a man who reverenced cows and saw to their welfare. The righteous Brahman, however, would not offer the least assistance to the starving bull, and went on his way having delivered the utmost insult and mockery. From this point on, the reader experiences strong emotional involvement as the pressures begin to mount against Gaphur. He was forced to give his one meal of the day to Maheś. Then he resorted to tearing straw from his roof to feed the animal as a result of which he and his daughter spent their nights huddled together in a corner of the hut to escape the rain pouring through the torn roof. When Maheś broke loose and wandered into the garden of a Hindu home, the householder turned him over to the police. Gaphur had to pawn his one brass plate to pay for Maheś's release. Nevertheless, his attitude toward the bull was characterized by the greatest affection. He often addressed him as his son. Finally, he decided to yield to the advice of others and sell Maheś to people who could take better care of him. Muslims from another neighborhood came to take the animal. It is at this point that we begin to detect the approaching dissolution of this broken man's personality. As the Muslims prepared to lead Maheś away, Gaphur threw their money at them and demanded the return of the bull in extremely abusive language. At a later point in the story, the zamindar's men demanded rent money from Gaphur, and he responded with unbelievable impudence. He was dragged off to the zamindar's office and punished with a savage beating. A few days later when he returned home from a fruitless search for work, he asked Āminā for a glass of water only to be told that there was none in the house. He struck her down in his rage, but as soon as she had departed with the water pot, he was seized with remorse. He knew only too well that the child, being a Muslim, was not permitted to draw from the village pond and that she often had to wait for hours before some Hindu woman would be kind enough to pour a little water in her vessel. Gaphur was nearly overwhelmed with the desperation of his situation when he heard a cry from the courtyard. Rushing out, he saw that Āminā had fallen and her earthen jar had broken. The famished Maheś was lapping up the spilled water. Gaphur, now completely bereft of reason, grabbed the heavy bar from his disassembled plough and struck one powerful blow on the animal's head. Maheś staggered for a moment and then fell dead on the ground. In the still of the night, Gaphur aroused his daughter and the two started off to the distant industrial city in search of a new life.

It would be impossible to miss Chatterji's point in this story. The bull, an object of Hindu veneration, belonged to a Muslim. The intolerant and intolerable Brahman priest implied at the beginning of the story that a Muslim would inevitably butcher such an animal, and Gaphur had better beware of Hindu wrath if he did. Yet the Hindu hatred of Muslims proved to be greater than their veneration of the bull. Not only did they refuse to help in providing for the animal, they drove Gaphur, through their inhuman treatment, to a point where he broke both spiritually and mentally. In his extremity, he did what the Hindu priest had predicted, but what had for him been unimaginable:

he murdered the beloved beast. Śaratcandra's story is an unmistakable appeal to his own community for a return to reason, for peace and harmony in every day life with men of the other community.

Thus, insofar as we can judge through these examples from the literature, communal attitudes seem to have come nearly full cycle in some parts of the Hindu community. The unselfconsciousness of Basu's style suggests to us that his period was characterized by an acceptance of the fact among many Hindus that Muslims and Hindus should live and work together. Each may have had certain criticisms to make of the other, but the basic and dangerous hostilities of a later day seem to have been lacking.

The middle decades of the century saw the strengthening of antagonism between Hindus and Muslims, and the high point of hostility to be expressed by a major Bengali literary figure is to be found in Bańkimcandra Chatterji's literature. Extreme aversion of Muslims was expressed by Bańkim at all levels - religious, social and political. He has pictured for us a society in which social contact with Muslims was to be deplored and the only acceptable political solution, Hindu supremacy. In the light of the whole of Bańkim's literature, there seems little doubt that these ideas and views did not originate with Bańkimcandra. They were, rather, the reflection of the position of that segment of Hindu society with which he had identified himself.

In a later period, a few intellectual leaders showed marked moderation in their writings, but their appeal to restraint and reason came too later to turn the tide. In our example from Śaratcandra Chatterji's literature, we have an appeal for the two communities to live and work together in harmony. He was, in fact, urging the relationship described by Basu, but the difference was fundamental. With Basu it was taken for granted; with Chatterji, it was something to be sought for earnestly. We cannot help but feel that by 1921 many thoughtful Hindus in the homes of Bengal pondered the dangers of the schism and the necessity of unity, but in the streets the crowds were singing Bande Mātaram.

NOTES

[1] Bandyopādhyāý, Brajendranāth, Rām Rām Basu, *Sāhitya Sādhak Caritamālā*. Calcutta: Baṅgīýa-Sāhitya-Pariṣat, 1956. p. 5.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[3] Basu, Rām Rām, *Rājā Pratāpādityacaritra*. Serampore: Mission Press, 1801. p. 3.

[4] Bandyopādhyāý, B., *op. cit*., p. 19.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 17.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 46.

[7] *Ibid*., pp. 11, 16.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 11.

[9] *Ibid*., pp. 13, 14.

[10] Thomas wrote, "He is . . . a person of more than ordinary capacity, and has been well educated in the Persian language. . . . This man has a considerable degree of knowledge and gifts." Carey said of him, " . . . he is certainly a man of the very best natural abilities that I have ever found among the natives." J. C. Marshman commented, "He is one of the most accomplished Bengali scholars of this day. . . . " *Ibid*., pp. 6 (footnote), 10, 11, 14.

[11] C. H. Philips, ed., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*. London: Oxford University Press, 1961. p. 446, 447.

[12] Basu, Rām Rām, *op. cit*., p. 3.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 35.

[14] *Ibid*., p. 46

[15] *Ibid*., p. 153.

[16] Bandyopādhyāý, Brajendranāth. Baṅkimcandra Chaṭṭopādhyāý, Sāhitya Sādhak Caritamālā. Calcutta: Baṅgīýa-Sāhitya-Pariṣat, 1963. p. 103.

[17] Baṅkimcandra Chatterji, Sītārām, *Baṅkim Racanabalī*. Calcutta:

Sāhitya Saṁsad, 1963. p. 881.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 881.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 897.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 899.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 899.

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 881.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 887.

[24] Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāý, Śaratcandra Caṭṭopādhyāý, *Sāhitya Sādhak Caritamālā*. p. 17.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 7.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[27] Gopālcandra Rāý's book *Śaratcandrer Pranaý-Kāhinī* (Calcutta: Sāhitya Sadan, 1961) is entirely devoted to attempting to prove that Śaratcandra was married.

STUDY V: THE DIMENSIONS OF LITERATURE AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL FOR THE STUDY OF BENGAL, 1800-1830

David Kopf

University of Minnesota

1. Cultural Dimension

In the late eighteenth century, in spite of the British "Orientalist" cultural policy of tolerance for non-European peoples, Bengali culture was held in low esteem by civil servants and missionaries. Even William Carey who after 1800 devoted his life to the cultivation of Bengali language and literature wrote of the Bengali people in 1795:

> "They are very avaricious and deceitful and cruelty to Animals and to each other are too common evils. Their servility is extreme and their ignorance also except a very few learned Men among them. They know nothing of Geography or Astronomy but are much addicted to Astrology."[1]

The superstition, ignorance and degradation that the missionary Carey found so widespread in Bengal only convinced him that these people needed Christ desperately. Because of his own flexible philosophy of evangelization, he felt that he needed to comprehend Bengali culture deeply and to do so he required fluency in their language. Unfortunately he was not enjoying great success in this undertaking. On August 13, 1795, he reported to the Baptist Society in England that:

> "One great difficulty in speaking to the Bengali people arises from the extreme ignorance of the Common people who are not able to understand one of their own countrymen who speaks the Language well without considerable difficulty. They have a confined Dialect composed of very few words which they work about and make them mean almost everything."[2]

If Carey's antipathy to Bengali culture came from his direct contact and observation of the people, the Orientalist indifference to Bengal stemmed from their exalted view of the Hindu Great Tradition. At no other time in the history of British rule in India were Englishmen so enamored of Hindu Civilization. As a product of the European Enlightenment, Orientalists perhaps over-valued the place of knowledge and reason as ingredients of civilization. In spite of the reputation of indigenous Bengali universities, the Orientalists considered eighteenth century Bengal an intellectual backwater of Hindu culture. Before the establishment of the College of Fort William in 1800, the Asiatic Society of Bengal generally ignored Bengali Hindu scholars and Society members took every opportunity to go to Benares for "reliable" information. It is no surprise then that the only government-sponsored Hindu college in the eighteenth century was not established in Bengal but in Benares by Jonathan Duncan in 1791.

The cultivated Bengali himself seems to have felt no differently about Benares being a true center for Hindu culture. Whether legendary or truthful, Rammohan Roy's knowledge of Hinduism has been valued greatly because he is said to have studied it in Benares. Even as late as the 1840's Debendranath Tagore felt it necessary to send four Brahmans to Benares to discover whether or not the Vedas were infallible.[3]

Between 1800 and 1830 the development of a systematized Bengali language and literature gradually altered the extremely negative view of Bengali culture. The genesis of the new attitude might be traced to Wellesley's decision to include Bengali in the curriculum of the College of Fort William.[4] For the first time Bengali was accorded official recognition as an Oriental language and literature worthy of serious consideration.[5] To win support from the Asiatic Society, College personnel promoted Bengali as the language of the Hindu people closest to classical Sanskrit.[6]

In 1815, Marquis Hastings committed the government to an educational program which greatly encouraged Bengali literary and cultural growth.[7] Since the 1813 Charter Renewal Act, Hindu revitalization schemes had been debated regularly in official circles. The Court of Directors still looked to Benares as the most likely center for any all-India education schemes since the Hindus "regarded it as the central point of their religious worship, and as the great repository of their learning."[8]

When Hastings himself went to Benares he found the existing Hindu high culture decadent and "the students only got by heart certain formalities unexplained to them by professors incapable of expounding the spirit of the lessons."[9] His dislike of Benares and his strong vernacularist leanings on behalf of popular culture improvement[10] are of extreme importance in understanding why Bengali literature took such great strides aesthetically in the nineteenth century. Utilizing the institutional mechanism of the College of Fort William and transforming the Orientalist movement into an agency for social reform, Hastings made Calcutta . . . not Benares . . . the center not for the revival of the Hindu past but for new experiments in cultural syncretism.

2. Historical Dimension

Bengali historiography was initially shaped by the Orientalist bias for classicism in which the essence of Hindu civilization was believed to be contained in a golden age and by the Serampore missionaries' Utopian faith in the ideas of universal progress. Both views were accompanied by the conceptual baggage of dark ages which on the one hand offered Bengalis and other Indians a causal theory for their own inferiority vis-a-vis the West, and on the other a program for revitalization. This program which Bengalis themselves soon called renaissance was based either on the Orientalist-conceived restoration of lost values or on the Serampore belief in man's perfectability. The Bengali intellectual's reception of differentiated temporal patterns: remote glory, present despair and hopeful future constituted the first stage of their historical consciousness.

The composite image of India's past was originally the work of a group of devoted amateur British scholars operating from the Asiatic Society of Bengal founded in 1784 by Sir William Jones.[11] It was they who discovered the common source for Indo-European languages;[12] they who rediscovered the Maurya Universal State and Buddhist India; and they who conceived the Gupta Era as a classical age.[13] Indeed, with the exception of Max Müller's work on Vedic India[14] and the recent results of the Indus Valley excavations,[15] most of what we imagine pre-Muslim India to be like was largely the result of the piece-meal accumulation of knowledge gathered by British and Indian Orientalists in the nineteenth century.

The two generations of Orientalists between Jones (1780's) and Prinsep (1830's) owe their basic scholarly orientation to the European Enlightenment. They were classical scholars of Greece and Rome in the manner of Gibbon and it was a simple matter to transfer their classical self-image to the Hindu past.[16] They were apostles of "Reason" and so were inclined as Colebrooke was, to bring to light the secular achievements of the Hindus or to project their own rationalism into the faith of the earliest Indian people.[17] Their actual lack of historical depth (in contradistinction to the Romantics) was compensated by their relativistic curiosity about the world and enabled them to write on world civilizations in the manner of Voltaire.[18] This classicism, rationalism, and cosmopolitanism contrasted sharply with the challenge of romanticism, patriotism, and nationalism represented by Macaulay in the subsequent age.[19]

The first historical works in Bengali during the Orientalist period were written at the College of Fort William by Carey's pandits. We are not certain whether Carey intended for these books to be used as Indian history per se or as instruments for the linguistic development of Bengali.

The most interesting of these early historical works in Bengali was Mṛtyuñjay Vidyālaṅkār's Rājāboli (Story of Kings). Historical characters were not new in India since recording the deeds of rulers and justifying the exploits of Islamic religious heroes were common features in Muslim civilization.[20] The Rājāboli, however, is most certainly not in the Muslim tradition nor does it reflect what we moderns call historical consciousness. It is the work of an eighteenth century pandit who had offered to crystallize his random thinking on the Hindu past into the concrete form of the printed word.

Published in 1808, Rājāboli seems curiously influenced by the findings and techniques of Orientalist scholarship. Mṛtyuñjay seems pedantic without being erudite; he ignores numismatic and other evidence for the more sacred, ahistorical accounts; and he makes no distinction between the mythological and verifiable event. Much of his history is anecdotal, commonplace tales of Hindu, Muslim, and British heroics from Kurukshetra to Plassey.

On the other hand, the Rājāboli is important as a document revealing the extent and kinds of historical knowledge prevalent among the eighteenth century Hindu literati of Bengal. It is significant, for example, that little or nothing is said about Buddhist India, Asoka, the Indo-Greek Bactrian Kingdoms, or the age of the Guptas. Of course, Mṛtyuñjay could not have been expected to know about any of this ancient history since accurate knowledge of pre-Muslim India had long ceased to be transmitted and was still to be re-discovered as scholarship in the nineteenth century. Mṛtyuñjay was, nevertheless, aware of the Sena dynasty, though his primary interest was reconstructing the legend of the Brahmans invited to Bengal from Kanauj in the tenth century.[21] He considered the Marathas as alien plunderers and viewed their presence in Bengal as sheer aggression.[22] Finally, it might be of some interest to note the way Mṛtyuñjay looked upon the rise of the British in Bengal. As a Hindu he probably favored the British over the Muslims, although there is little in the Rājāboli to suggest it. Coming a generation or so before political consciousness and at least two generations before the advent of national consciousness, Mṛtyuñjay matter-of-factly recorded the events "leading up to the establishment of the Company's ownership of Bengal."[23]

It was Rammohan Roy who in the second decade of the century has best represented the Orientalist view of Indian history . . . particularly the image of the golden age. In a series of Bengali and English tracts Rammohan argued that the present age in Bengal was dark and decadent, full of superstition and ignorance.[24] Hindus had only to turn to the pristine age of the Vedas and to purify their texts and hearts by recapturing that original spirit.[25] Whether we are inclined to acknowledge it or not, Rammohan was the first Bengali intellectual who could and would transmit the Orientalist image of a golden age to his own people.

Though we know little of Rammohan's outside influences before 1814, (when he began to reside in Calcutta) we may reasonably assume that he did absorb many of the facets of the Orientalist world view. His civil service employer, John Digby, was among the earliest College of Fort William students (1801-1803) and though none of Digby's essays are extant, his fellow students have left evidence of prevailing intellectual preoccupation with the Hindu renaissance.[26] Rammohan knew Orientalists such as H. H. Wilson and was probably familiar with Colebrooke's work on the Vedas[27] in which the Orientalist anticipated so many of Rammohan's own persuasive arguments.

In April, 1818, Serampore Mission published the *Dig darśan* with the English title of *Magazine for Indian Youth*. Besides its importance as the earliest periodical in Bengali, it was the first journal to disseminate segments of Western knowledge to students of Hindu College and to the *pāṭhśālās* of Radhakant Deb's School Society. The *Dig darśan* was freely circulated and it is likely that from its pages Calcutta youth first learned of Western history, literature, and science.[28]

One of the most influential subjects that the journal dealt with was the uses of history for cultural change. Indeed, it was the Serampore missionaries with their popularized historical interpretation of modern Europe who first conveyed the concept of progress to the Hindu elite of Calcutta. Unlike the high-culture Orientalists who sought to transform the Hindu mythological past into an authentically historic one; or Rammohan Roy, who wished to recapture the religious spirit of the Vedic golden age; or Mṛtyuñjay, who was yet steeped in ahistorical myth and legend; Serampore rejected the whole of the Hindu past and aimed to alert the contemporary Hindu mind to its potential for entering the modern world. There was, however, no Evangelical preaching in the pages of the *Dig darśan* about the intrinsic superiority of the West. Serampore presented a picture of Europe since the Renaissance, hoping to change the archetypal direction of Hindu thought and to awaken a desire for future self-realization in history.

In an article in August, 1818, the missionaries introduced a study of the history of Europe into the schools of India. In their characteristic way, the missionaries approached their subject in the form of questions. For example, how did Europe, which "holds most of the world under its influence," attain "its present superiority both in power and knowledge"?[29] In ancient times, the missionaries wrote:

> Europe was in a state of barbarism and the center of Universal power was in Asia. The seat of empire has now transferred to Europe, where the arts and sciences have attained their highest perfection and from where by a singular revolution in human affairs, they are now flowing back in those countries, in which they have been almost extinguished.[30]

Modern Europe commenced with the Renaissance. In this period "desire gradually arose for genuine learning and knowledge, and the dark clouds of ignorance which had for so long a time overshadowed the whole of Europe began to disperse."[31] The greatest achievement of the Renaissance was not its classical revival but the development of the vernacular languages of Europe "which underwent a gradual improvement and obtained a firm foundation . . . through which the nations of Europe have since been impelled forward in a course of steady improvement."[32]

There followed in the wake of the Renaissance on of the most significant events of all time: the development of the printing press. Printing immediately reduced the price of books and "placed the means of acquiring knowledge within the reach of the great bulk of the people."[33] Consequently, "the qualities of the mind were aroused and such an impulse given to them that there is now no fear that mankind will ever relapse into barbarism."[34]

The missionaries predicted that printing would have a similar impact on India. "Wherever printing had been fully introduced," they wrote, "learning and knowledge have immediately spread."[35] It would demolish the power of Brahmanism as it had that of Popery during the Reformation. Printing was indeed God's gift, the perfect medium to transmit the light of truth to the suffering masses of India:

> Before its invention, the progress made in knowledge during a thousand years, was scarcely equal to that made in a hundred years since. Europe has now sent its philosophy and science to the inhabitants of Hindoostan and with it they have also sent this invaluable art, by which the knowledge now spreading in the East will continually remain and gradually acquire new splendor till every city in Hindoostan shall be filled with light.[36]

The first Bengali intellectual to fully reflect the historical attitudes of the Serampore missionaries was Krishna Mohan Bannerjea, converted to Christianity by Alexander Duff after 1830.[37] Before 1830, most historically-minded members of the Bengali intelligentsia followed Rammohan Roy in his use of the Orientalist world view as a means for cultural self-analysis and purification.[38]

3. Socio-Economic Dimension

The literature of early nineteenth century Bengal reflecting the cultural interaction between India and the West and an emerging historical consciousness was the product of a particular group of men who, in most cases, earned their livelihood from their knowledge and skills in the communicative arts. They were professionals in the sense that they had been trained in the technical aspects of occupations centering around communication and were paid for the utility of what they had mastered. Since the inception of the College of Fort William, with its emphasis on linguistic instruction for civil servants, the knowledge of Bengali had become a valuable commodity. It was the British Orientalist value placed on Bengali, among other Indian languages, and made attractive by monetary rewards, which may have accounted for the Brahman's willingness to shift his cultural allegiance from classical Sanskrit to the language of the Bengali people.

On the other hand, long before Macaulay's Minute of 1835, English was also a valuable commodity on the marketplace of cultural interaction. Each writer of Bengali literature was not only bilingual but had modified his professional habits and social outlook to a lesser or greater extent as a result of a close relationship with a European.

In most cases, the relationship and subsequent acculturation occurred in an institutional setting. Sociologically, the important change in Calcutta by 1820 was not the formation of a new class but the transformation of the old literati caste into a modern intelligentsia. For this reason, perhaps, as in the case of Japan where the older Samurai caste also modernized itself, a dichotomy arose between the public world of the profession and the private inner world of the home, where deeply ingrained cultural traits persisted.

Many scholars accepted the intelligentsia as a social symptom in the culture syndrome we call modern civilization. With the rise of proliferating rebellions and revolutions which we call the period of Westernization, the relative stability of classical norms which many of us call traditional civilization, has virtually disappeared. The class of literati which had functioned universally as the articulators of a heritage gave way to the intelligentsia who functioned to interpret change. If the literati represented the disequilibrium of conflicting theories of progress, ultimately the literati's aesthetic norms of harmony, tradition, and perfection, gave way to the intelligentsia's new value in originality, futurism, and pluralism. With the rapidly changing context of literature in the West, literary content became a syncretic, highly elusive experience of ever-shifting settings, themes, sentiments, and characterizations.

In Calcutta of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, British institutional needs created a new role for the Bengali literati which facilitated the latter's transformation into an intelligentsia. The commercial needs of British Agency Houses, the legal needs of British courts, the educational and linguistic needs of the College of Fort William each in its own way assisted in forming what Robert Redfield has called the class of cultural brokers. "These brokers, mediators, or interpreters constitute a qualified segment of the cultural encounter, mediating the alien cultural influences to the natives and interpreting the indigenous cultural influences to the foreigners."[39]

This new role of the literati as cultural mediator which followed in the wake of European intrusion throughout Asia and Africa resulted in widening the social distance between themselves and those in the traditional class structure. If in Europe the alienation of the intellectual stemmed from his marginal position vis-a-vis the new industrial class structure,[40] in Bengal as elsewhere in Afro-Asia, social marginality arose out of the dynamics of cultural encounter.

There were various types of traditional Bengali literati of the eighteenth century who joined the ranks of the intelligentsia precisely because of their newly acquired roles as brokers to the English. One major type of Bengali literatus on the eve of the nineteenth century was the Persianized Hindu. Moghul policy throughout Hindustan had been generally tolerant and welcomed Hindu participation in both the high and middle ranks of its administration.[41] In Bengal, during the Moghul period, just as the Islamic mysticism of Sufism helped fuse the popular culture of Hindus and Muslims,[42] a Persianized cultural pattern was pervading the arts, literature and etiquette and contributing to a syncretistic high culture shared by many elitist Hindus and Muslims. Many Hindus wore Persian dress, spoke and wrote Persian as well as any educated Muslim and, if Bengali Hindu literature of the eighteenth century is a valid key to their thoughts and sentiments, they embraced a Persianized world-view to a considerable degree.[43] It is important to add, however, that the Bengali literati, whether high caste Brahmans or Kayasthas, were apparently never assimilated into the Islamic culture but remained devout Hindus.

Both Hindu and Muslim zamindars shared the same fate when in 1793 the principle of private property was ruthlessly introduced into Bengal and the new urban commercial class of Calcutta gradually replaced the ruling class in importance.[44] What probably hurt the Persianized Hindu most of all was the Cornwallis policy of excluding natives from the responsible posts in the administration, thereby leaving this highly educated group unemployed.[45] On the other hand, long association with an alien culture may well have enabled many of these people to survive since they were flexible enough to adjust to the new socio-cultural values of the European. This was particularly true for the Tagore family, which soon had established profitable relations with the French in Chandernagore and with the English in Calcutta;[46] and of Rammohan Roy, who grew wealthy from his association with the new English civil servants.[47] Rām Rām Basu, another Persianized Hindu, accommodated himself neatly to the Christian zeal of the Baptist missionaries and was one of the first pandits hired at the College of Fort William in 1801.

Rām Rām Basu, Carey's famous munshi who wrote the first historical prose work at the College of Fort William, was born probably in Chinsura, sometime between 1774 and 1780, and spent most of his early years in a village in the Twenty-four Pargannas.[48] He was Carey's first tutor in Bengali and Sanskrit and his earliest informant on the indigenous culture. Carey continually sought to win over Rām Rām to Christ and was partially successful intellectually. In a series of tracts written for the Serampore missionaries between 1799 and 1805 Rām Rām anticipated both Rammohan Roy's admiration for the ethical Christ and his frustrating reluctance to become the Indian Luther. Viewed sociologically, Rām Rām was among the earliest members of the Bengali intelligentsia since he no longer merely transmitted a heritage but interpreted the cultural encounter.

A second type of literatus was the learned Bengali Brahman who had previously taught at one of the indigenous institutions of higher learning. Perhaps no one better represented this group than Mṛtyuñjay Vidyālaṅkār, Carey's chief pandit in the Bengali department at the College of Fort William. Born in 1762 in the part of Midnapore close to Orissa, this Chaṭṭopādhyāy Brahman presumably received a rigid, regionally-traditional Sanskritic education at Nator totally devoid Persian and European influences.[49] He left Midnapore sometime in the 1790's and, as in the case of so many other Brahmans seemingly affected by the Permanent Settlement, came to Calcutta in search of a livelihood.

In May, 1801, Carey's search for a chief pandit in the College Bengali Department ended when he hired Mṛtyuñjay for a salary of two hundred rupees a month. For the next several years Mṛtyuñjay was as close to Carey as any Hindu, spending several hours of every working day in Calcutta as the latter's private tutor in Sanskrit, as his assistant lecturer to College classes,[50] and as ghostwriter for at least one of Carey's publications.[51]

As a result of this relationship and the high degree of cross-fertilization of ideas at the College, Mṛtyuñjay broadened his outlook of the world and altered his historical perspective. His Rājāboli was, in spite of its limitations, the first general history of India by a Hindu. He was one of the founders of the highly Westernized Hindu College and an active member of most of the social reform programs initiated by Marquis Hastings. He also urged the abolition of satī in print a year before Rammohan.[52]

Most important perhaps, Mṛtyuñjay represented the cream of the Sanskritic literati who by simply choosing to write in Bengali sanctified that language. This process of Sanskritization subsequently elevated Bengali to a medium for sophisticated expression. In this sense, Vidyāsāgar was Mṛtyuñjay's successor.

The third major type of literati group on the eve of the nineteenth century were the descendents of Calcutta nouveau riche. Throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, while Calcutta developed as an urban center, many Bengalis accumulated riches through advantageous associations with the Europeans, profiting by the vacuum created from the deterioration of Mughal authority and the adventurism of European commercial expansion. Nabakrishna Deb, who founded the Sabhabajar Raj family, was powerful and wealthy as a result of his close contact with Clive and Hastings.[53] Gobindaram Mitra, Holwell's "black deputy", made his money as a tax collector in Calcutta and promptly bought land with it -- much to the advantage of his descendents.[54] During the Napoleonic wars Ramdulal Deb built his fortune largely on the American shipping trade which flourished at the expense of Company shipping.[55]

These mid-eighteenth century figures were members of an elite, but their generation, far too preoccupied with trade and finance, produced no intellectuals. They were mostly banians, largely of obscure caste origins in spite of their surnames, who subsequently raised their caste status by Sanskritizing their cultural and religions performances.[56] They spent their money buying land, building bathing ghats and temples, exhibiting dancing girls, and lavishly fulfilling their religious and familial obligations.

Radhakant Deb was a member of the Calcutta Bengali-Hindu elite which owed both its wealth and social origins to profitable relations with Europeans. Radhakant's father, Gopi Mohan Deb, was the adopted son of Nabakrishna Deb, who won his family fame, wealth, and social status in Calcutta during the chaotic middle decades of the eighteenth century. In the sophisticated atmosphere of the metropolis, Radhakant learned Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit, Bengali, and English.[58] Unlike other members of the Calcutta Bengali community (who were perhaps not as wealthy as the Debs), Radhakant did not feel compelled to enter a profession but developed his interests independent of direct British contact. In 1803 while his Calcutta-born friend, Tarinicharan Mitra, professionalized his linguistic abilities as a faculty member at the College of Fort William, Radhakant on his own initiative started to work on a Sanskrit dictionary which by 1809 had become so large and diversified in subject matter, that he transformed it into an encyclopedia.[59]

The Debs lived as did other members of the Calcutta Hindu elite, performing their religious and social duties apparently without question. They were not listed among the new Society of Friends that clustered around Rammohan Roy in 1815-16[60] and, as was the custom then, the Debs performed an elaborate enough Durga Puja in their home to gain notoriety in the local English press.[61] In 1816, Radhakant's father contributed a large sum of money towards the establishment of Hindu College and served on its first managing committee along with members of the prominent Tagore and Mullick families.[62] Some years later Radhakant took his father's place on the committee. In this way, by virtue of his family's ability to provide financial assistance, Radhakant Deb commenced his long and interesting career as a member of the Hindu College Managing Committee.[63]

Radhakant's intellectual development vis-a-vis Western learning seems to have begun when he joined the newly formed Calcutta School Book and School Societies in 1817-18. Through these Orientalist institutions, and feeling no threat to his cultural integrity, he absorbed new cultural values which seem to have profoundly influenced him for the rest of his life. For the first time, presumably, he established durable contacts with the Serampore missionaries, the high culture Orientalists, and independent philanthropists such as David Hare. He took an active role in the institutional operations of the Calcutta School Society by becoming its native secretary and by personally supervising the reform of Calcutta schools.[64] He grew so involved with these activities that his house became the informal headquarters for the School Society[65] and the annual examinations were held there.[66]

Radhakant's new cultural attitudes, intellectual development, and growing social consciousness in the 1820's are best reflected in his publications for the Calcutta School Book Society. His cultural attitudes were clearly Orientalist-inspired in that he saw no conflict between indigenous and Western learning but sought to integrate both in the Calcutta school system. This point cannot be emphasized enough since Radhakant and his Bengali peers would never have participated in a program which they felt was aimed at the destruction of their own civilization. They believed in change but not in the obliteration of their deeply felt cultural values.

Radhakant's Bāṅglā śikṣā-grantha (1821), which he translated as "A Bengali Spelling Book", was in reality a junior-sized encyclopedia for student use and included an elementary analysis of language structure, spelling rules, geographical terms, and basic arithmetic.[67] Though a simple textbook, it is culturally revealing, containing both indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge without the slightest hint of contradiction or stress between the two. Also in 1821, Deb collaborated with J. D. Pearson in bringing out the first edition of the *Nītikathā* (Moral Tales) which drew on both Christian and Hindu traditions and were designed to inculcate a feeling of morality without any partisan bias.[68]

In 1822, Deb collaborated with a pandit friend of his in a book advocating female education. The *Strī-śikṣār vidyā* (Female Education), though it urged that girls be instructed largely in domestic skills at home, was radical for its time not only in India but in Europe as well.[69] In perspective, Radhakant can hardly be blamed for not supporting institutional co-education for women and their equal occupational rights with men. Radhakant actively supported missionary efforts in educating girls[70] even though this may seem contradictory to those who know him only as the defender of the women's right to burn as widows.

Deb was also interested in the natural sciences, which he probably learned from William Carey, John Mack, and others.[71] The popular textbook on astronomy (*Jyotirvidyā*) attributed to William Yates was at least partially written by Deb. Finally his *Prācīn itihāser samacchay* (Epitome of Ancient History), published in 1830, suggests that he had become equally familiar with Western historical writing.

In the final analysis, the most revolutionary social act by the newly formed Bengali intelligentsia was their willingness to communicate bits and pieces of their special fund of knowledge to a potentially invisible audience by means of the printed word. Whether translating Sanskrit classics into Bengali or introducing European ideas into Bengali, the significant result was the creation of a body of printed material which would eventually break the intellectual monopoly of any one elite class.

4. The Existential Dimension

The eighteenth century in most traditional Asian cultures, both from reasons of internal decline and European expansion, was a dark age of disintegrating political and moral institutions. In society after society, the older answers to the eternal questions no longer sufficed and the contemporary literature reflects over-stress on stylistic refinement which is one symptom of cultural exhaustion. Bengal's first generation of modern intelligentsia was born during the administration of Warren Hastings (1772-85), just after the political upheaval of 1757, the unparalleled economic exploitation between 1756 and 1770, and the disastrous famine of 1770-72, (which wiped out an estimated one-third of the population).[72] They also saw nature itself play havoc with Western Bengal's riverine system in the later decades of the century, drying up old, vital commerical and cultural centers and creating entirely new rivers that pushed economic opportunities eastward.[73]

This period of prolonged and chronic social and economic distress in Bengal was reflected in cultural decay. It is common for scholars of Bengali literature to refer to the period between Bharat Chandra's death in 1760 and the opening of the College of Fort William in 1800 as the least productive in the entire literary history of Bengal.[74] S. K. De has perhaps gone farthests of all in linking the literary and cultural decadence of the period to the gradual disappearance of the old order in Bengal:

> It is obvious that under these political, social and intellectual conditions, no literature worth the name could easily flourish. With the ruin of the zamindars and the depredation of the Brahmans, who constituted respectively the aristocracy of wealth and the aristocracy of intellect, a process of disintegration had begun in the social fabric which ended in an absolute dissolution of all social solidarity. It took nearly a half a century before there was a general subsidence of these effects and a new order of things could take the place of the old. With a reconstruction of art and ideals, there was indeed the birth of a new world and a new literature. . . .[75]

The British intrusion may have been political and economic on the surface but seen in a deeper perspective it represented the imposition of an alien culture. Like the Moghuls before them, the English came to India speaking a different language, wearing different clothes, espousing a different religion. Unlike the Moghuls, however, the British after Plassey represented Europe on the eve of the French and Industrial Revolutions. In the next generations, European civilization would become so transformed that the cultural encounter between India and the West would come to be interpreted as a confrontation between tradition and modernity. The Bengali intelligentsia, therefore, had not only to interpret an alien culture but to comprehend the essence of that new cosmopolitan configuration of modern civilization.

Between 1800 and 1830 in Calcutta, the Bengali intellectual was a confused but optimistic individual balancing himself precariously between partially digested alien traits and unsatisfactory indigenous traditions. He established new relationships with civil servants, businessmen and missionaries both for profit and to use them as windows to the West. It was his good fortune that the distance between Britain and India was long and that the Orientalists to whom he related had already become Indianized. The Bengalis' distorted view of the West during the sympathetic Orientalist period helped establish good rapport between European and Indian and inculcated a hope in both for the future.

The Bengali intellectual of the early 1800's found himself insecure psychologically not only because he was in the center of a spatial encounter between two cultures, but also because he found himself centered lengthwise in a newly discovered historical dimension. The

Orientalists infused him with their image of an Indian golden age while the Serampore missionaries transmitted a Protestant's view of the medieval dark ages. Both left the Bengali with a faith in the perfectibility of all mankind. On the one hand, the intelligentsia viewed itself as representative of an exhausted culture and on the other, as representative of a culture organically disrupted by historical circumstances but capable or revitalization. It is not surprising, then, that Bengalis themselves should interpret their nineteenth century heritage as a renaissance.

The Bengali's psychological uncertainty was compounded by the social consequences of his newly formed relationship with the European. He found himself the nuclear center of an expanded network of contacts and loyalties. The intellectual very often combined within himself the attributes of the Hindu society as creator, destroyer and preserver. Like his counterpart in modern Japan, he sought to create new levels of social consciousness while destroying decadent social behavior such as caste rigidity, while further seeking to preserve satisfying social ties with family, kin, and the transcendent society of the sacred. Rammohan Roy's adherence to the spirit of Utilitarian rationalism, his affinity for Sufi mysticism, his admiration for Christ, his emotional identification with the Vedic age, and his reluctance to part with the Brahmanical sacred thread were not simply the logically contradictory fragments of an incomplete Western man. Seen from the vantage point of his own milieux, Rammohan was a sensitive human being who apparently had already reconciled two indigenous traditions in his mind when called upon to re-shape his world-view to accommodate the British intrusion. Indeed, the intellectual eclecticism, the disparity between word and deed, public performance and private behavior which so many of us find disturbing about Rammohan, and which persisted in other Bengalis throughout the century was simply the attempt to rise above the quicksand of impending modernization.

Throughout nineteenth century Bengal, as in other pre-modern cultures in a state of transition, the cultural, social and historical pressures on the psyche of the intelligentsia seem best expressed in a literature of spiritual crisis. In every classical civilization, those pre-established lines of contact between men and the cosmos variously conceived from culture to culture persist not only as traditions but as means for maintaining moral and social stability. This cosmological or religious devotion to a tradition seems so powerful that in almost all cases, the secular challenge of the modern West has invariably produced the defensive position by non-Western intellectuals that the essence of their culture is spiritual.

Robert Redfield and Milton Singer have focused on the religious changes that take place in a great tradition as a result of the intelligentsia's new role as cultural broker in a heterogenetic urban center.[76] Mircea Eliade has demonstrated an interesting correlation in all primitive and classical societies between the secularization of culture and the emergence of an historical consciousness.[77] For Eliade, pre-modern societies continually re-enact the same primordial sacred drama and are consequently archetypal and ahistorical whereas modern societies, by placing their value on the realm of the profane, historize their traditions and shift their view to the future.[78] Karl Mannheim, thinking mostly of the West, has argued that the multiplicity of religious sects of modern Europe owes its origin to a dynamically new class structure and that the multiplicity of religious and non-religious values, attitudes and beliefs represents classes either in ascendance or descendance.[79] These three explanations, all valid in their own way, only accentuate the priority of the existential dimension. Behind culture, society, and history the human being is faced with the increasingly accelerated pace of cultural change and the corresponding increase in the material and non-material objects which he must choose to innovate, destroy or preserve.

Between 1800 and 1830, most of the original literature in Bengali reflected differing responses to the spiritual crisis. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century Bengalis wrote passionately on the religious question and it is hardly surprising that at the turn of this next century religion and nationalism should be wed on behalf of the independence movement.[80]

As early as 1800, Rām Rām Basu, as a result of his intimate relationship with William Carey, already anticipated that ambiguity and ambivalence of religious identity which grew more intense in nineteenth century Bengal with every passing generation. In a pamphlet which Rām Rām entitled Jnāñoday (Dawn of Knowledge) all the prevailing social and religious evils of Hindu Bengal were exposed with an almost evangelical indignation. But the indignation had a peculiar middle-class tone to it whenever Rām Rām attacked those twin evils of moral laxity and idolatry. In this Christian-inspired puritanical notion we can find the germ of an idea generally attributed to Rammohan Roy and finally institutionalized by Debendranath Tagore as the Brahmo Samaj. Rām Rām had already endowed the Vedic Brahma with the attributes of Jahovah and in Rām Rām we have reached the first stage leading to the discovery or invention of a monotheistic tradition in Hinduism.

In this pamphlet also Rām Rām, a Kayastha, attacked the Brahmans who from then on take on the characteristics of the medieval Roman Catholic clergy conspiring to enshroud the world in ignorance and darkness. When Carey dispatched the pamphlet to Britain he wrote:

> We have another piece nearly ready, written by a native (Ram Bashu) exposing the folly and danger of the Hindu system. This is peculiarly pointed against Brahmunism, something like those thundering addresses the idle, corrupt, and ignorant clergy of the Church of Rome at the Commencement of the reformation. . . .[81]

In the next few years, Rām Rām composed several short pieces on Christ's message, and translated a Bengali version of a Life of Christ in Verse. But Rām Rām continually resisted actual conversion and died a Hindu. "Oh Sir! I am most wretched," he wrote once in Bengali to a leading

Baptist in England. "I understand something of the gospel, and can make it known a little to others, but I cannot leave my caste. This is my great difficulty. . . ."[82]

In these basic features of Rām Rām's existential situation we can recognize the profile of at least a dozen members of the Bengal intelligentsia later in the century. Of all, Rammohan Roy seems Rām Rām's successor. Both chose to reinterpret their own religious tradition rather than to submit their souls to an alien faith. Both chose the more treacherous path of cultural purification and condemned members of their own elitist class for rationalizing the existence of moral and social evil. And as a consequence both shared the contempt of the Brahman community. Their growing cultural alienation and marginality marked them as intelligentsia. William Carey, who himself felt an increasing disaffiliation from the Baptists in England was sympathetically aware of the new type of intellectual precariously straddling two worlds. He wrote of Rām Rām in 1802:

> Poor Ram Bashoo is always glad to give the Brahmans a . . . blow where he has the opportunity but I fear he is an unenvied man. He is to us what Erasmus was to the Reformation. It would entertain you to see the Brahmans wheel off to the other side of the way when we are disputing in the Streets; and it would grieve you to hear the torrents of abuse and obscenity with which the vile sort frequently assault us. . . . God has however broke the infernal seclusion and I trust a spark is struck in Bengal which will never be extinguished.[83]

NOTES

[1] Letters from William Carey to the Baptist Mission Society, March 13, 1795, in William Carey Letters, Baptist Mission Society Archives, London, Box 3. Cited hereafter as Carey Letters.

[2] Carey to the Society, August 13, 1795, ibid.

[3] F. M. Müller, Biographical Essays (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1884), p. 40.

[4] The College of Fort William, located in Calcutta and founded by Wellesley in 1800, as a training center for British civil servants in India.

[5] In the eighteenth century Orientalists did compile grammars and dictionaries in Bengali, but their purpose was not so much to cultivate it as to discover basic principles.

[6] Since most of the Sanskrit pandits hired at the College were from Bengal, it is not difficult to understand why this view was readily accepted.

[7] S. K. De, Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), p. 46.

[8] Extract from a letter in the Public Department from the Court of Directors to the Governor-General-in-Council of Bengal, June 3, 1814, quoted in B. D. Basu, History of Education in India Under the East India Company (Calcutta: R. Chatterjee, n.d.) p. 8.

[9] W. Adam, Reports on the State of Education in Bengal (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1941), p. 423.

[10] Hastings believed that Europeans had exaggerated the value of Greek and Latin. See Public Disputations of the Students of the College of Fort William (Calcutta: Hindoostanee Press, 1814), p. 5.

[11] The Society's original plan was the work of Warren Hastings, who had been asked to be its president but had declined in favor of Jones.

[12] For the original theory see W. Jones, "Third Annual Discourse, February 2, 1786", Asiatick Researches, I (1788), pp. 442-3.

[13] For a reliable source on these achievements see R. Mitra, et al,

Centenary Review of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1885).

[14] The East India Company commissioned Müller to translate all the Vedas and, in the 1850's, he became the first European to do precisely that.

[15] For a detailed study of Indian archeology in the first half of the twentieth century see the special Jubilee number of Ancient India: Archeological Survey of India, IX (1953).

[16] Aristocratic Orientalists such as James Halhed and Colebrooke, with good backgrounds in English higher education, became devoted Classicists.

[17] Lord Minto's Minute of March 6, 1811, which bemoans the decay of Hindu secular institutions and suggests means to revive them, was really written by Colebrooke. See Adams, p. 419.

[18] This is clearly evidenced in the teaching by Orientalists at the College of Fort William and in the essays written by their students. The essays were compiled and published as Primitae Orientales.

[19] The Orientalist-Anglicist controversy should be viewed in part against the background of British intellectual, political, and social movements.

[20] See the sections on Indian Muslim historiography in C. H. Philips, ed., Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp.115-151.

[21] M. Vidyālaṅkār, "Rājāboli", Mṛtyuñjay Granthābalī, ed. B. N. Bandyopādhyāy (Calcutta: Rañjan Publishing House, 1939), pp. 137-38.

[22] Ibid., pp. 181-82.

[23] Ibid., p. [illegible].

[24] Rammohan argued that, by disregarding the true meaning of the Vedas, "literature and philosophy decayed." Indians produced "all those absurdities and idolatrous notions which have . . . destroyed every mark of reason and darkened every beam of understanding." R. Roy, Translations of the Cena Upanishad (Calcutta: Hindoostanee Press, 1816), p. iv.

[25] Ibid., pp. i-ii.

[26] Supra, Footenote 18.

[27] See H. T. Colebrooke, "On the Vedas", Asiatick Researches (1805) reprinted in Miscellaneous Essays (1837 ed.,: London: William H. Allen and Co., 1837), p. 16.

[28] The *Dig darśan* was also sold publicly at slightly more than one rupee per copy. See "Dig Darśan", *Friend of India* I, (May, 1818), [illegible]6.

[29] "Progress of Events in Europe", Dig darsan, V (August, 1818), 170.

[30] *Ibid*., p. 172.

[31] *Ibid*., p. 204.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] "On the Origins of Printing", *ibid*., p. 206.

[34] *Ibid*.

[35] *Ibid*., p. 208.

[36] "On the Origins of Printing", Part II, in *ibid*., Vol. II (October, 1818), 280.

[37] K. M. Bannerjea (1818-1885) deserves more scholarly attention than he has received. Though an advocate of Duff's basic notions or progress, he retained his identity as an Indian and was more a modernist than an Anglicist.

[38] If Rammohan utilized the Orientalist view for religious revival, Kashi Prasad Ghose, a brilliant student at Hindu College was, in 1828, among the earliest to stress a secular concept of the golden age. See C. Ghose, "Essay on Mill's British India", *Calcutta Gazette*, February 14, 1828, quoted in A. C. Das Gupta, ed., *Days of John Company* (Calcutta: West Bengal Government Press, n.d.), p. 288.

[39] Milton Singer, "The Great Tradition in a Metropolitan Center: Madras", *Traditional India: Structure and Change* (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1959), p. 141.

[40] See in particular Mannheim's chapter on "The Sociological Problems of the Intelligentsia", *Ideology and Utopia*, trans. L. Wirth and E. Shils, (New York: Harvest Company, n.d.), pp. 153-64.

[41] Percival Spear, *The Nabobs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. xvi.

[42] See my section on Bengal Sufism in "Bibliographical Notes on Early, Medieval and Modern Sufism", *Folklore*, VIII (February, 1962), 72-80.

[43] See De. pp. 25-26.

[44] Amales Tripathi, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency*,

1793-1833 (Bombay: Orient Longmans, 1956), p. 18.

[45] N. K. Sinha, The Economic History of Bengal, I (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961), p. 192.

[46] The Tagore family's relations with the French and English are sketched in *A Brief Account of the Tagore Family*, Vol. CXXVII of *India Office Library Tracts* (Calcutta: I. C. Bose and Company, 1868), pp. 1-13.

[47] Evidence of Rammohan's relations with civil servants may be found in J. K. Majumdar, ed., *Selections from Official Letters and Documents Relating to the Life of Raja Rammohan Roy* (Calcutta: Oriental Book Agency, 1958), pp. xxxiv, 190-91.

[48] B. N. Bandyopādhyāy, *Rām Rām Basu*, Sāhitya Sādhak Caritmālā Series (Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣaḍ, 1928), pp. 5-6.

[49] See introduction to Mṛtyuñjay Granthābalī, pp. iii-iv.

[50] The practice seems to have been for the Chief Pandit to sit with the European instructor in class to assist in correcting pronunciations or to answer particular types of questions.

[51] S. K. Das, *Bāṅglā Gadyasāhityer Itihāsa* (Calcutta: Mitrālay, 1963), p. 136.

[52] Mṛtyuñjay's pamphlet appeared in 1817, whereas Rammohan's first tract on *satī* appeared in 1818.

[53] Y. C. Bāgal, *Rādhākānt Deb* (S-S-C Series: 1957), p. 5.

[54] *An Account of the Late Govindram Mitter*, Vol. CCCLXIX of *India Office Library Tracts* (Calcutta: National Press, 1869), p. 65.

[55] G. C. Ghose, *A Lecture on the Life of Ramdoolal Dey*, Vol. CXXXVII of *India Office Library Tracts* (Bellore: Bengali Press, 1868), p. 59.

[56] This process of Sanskritization is described in M. N. Srinivas, "A Note on Sanskritization and Westernization", *Far Eastern Quarterly*, Vol. XV (August, 1956), reprinted in Introduction to the Civilization of India, comp. Milton Singer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 365-80.

[57] Nabakrishna Deb spent nine lakhs of rupees on his mother's *śrādh* ceremony. Sinha, *Economic History*, II, 223.

[58] Bāgal, *Rādhākānt Deb*, p. 6.

[59] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[60] The actual term Brahmo is not used until the Brahmo Samaj organization became established in 1828. At first, in 1805, the group called itself *Ātmiya Sabhā* or Society of Friends.

[61] *Calcutta Gazette* article on "Puja", October 20, 1814, quoted in Gose, B., *Bidrohī Dirojio* (Calcutta: Bāk-Sāhītya, 1961), p. 28.

[62] The first committee was composed of Ram Gopal Mullick, Hari Mohun Tagore, and Gopi Mohun Deb. "Hindu College at Calcutta", *Asiatic Journal*, II (January-June, 1817), 133-34.

[63] For more details, see Bāgal, *Rādhākānt Deb*, pp. 9-17.

[64] *Ibid*., p. 7.

[65] *Ibid*.

[66] "Calcutta School Book Society", *Asiatic Journal*, XIV (September, 1822), 296-97.

[67] The book's contents are briefly described in De, pp. 554-55.

[68] Bāgal, *Rādhākānt Deb*, p. 7.

[69] Deb's 1824 edition contains an interesting dialogue by means of which he obviously attempted to dispel traditional prejudices against female education. As for example, "Question: But old men say that a girl who reads and writes becomes a widow. Answer: Nonsense. It is not supported by scriptures and our Puranas refer to educated women. . . ." Quoted in R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), p. 60.

[70] Bāgal, *Rādhākānt Deb*, pp. 28-33.

[71] Deb was in contact with these men in the Society throughout the 1820's.

[72] For a reliable analysis of the famine of 1770 see Sinha, *Economic History*, II, 48-67.

[73] R. Mukerjee, *The Changing Face of Bengal: A Study in Riverine Economy* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1938).

[74] See especially De, pp. 5-56.

[75] *Ibid*., p. 32.

[76] Singer, pp. 141-82.

[77] Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1959).

[78] See particularly "Misfortune and History", in *ibid*., pp. 95-162.

[79] Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*.

[80] See S. N. Hay, "The Marriage of Politics and Religion: The

Extremists", in ed. W. T. de Bary, Sources of Indian Tradition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 705-38.

[81] William Carey to Baptist Mission, October 10, 1800; quoted in Bandyopādhyāy, Rām Rām Basu, p. 16.

[82] College Lane Chapel, Northampton. Letter dated March 7, 1801, from Rām Rām Basu to Ryland in Northampton Collection of Serampore Letters.

[83] Carey to Fuller, January 21, 1802, Carey Letters, Box 3.

STUDY VI: MODERNIZATION AND CULTURAL CHANGE

The Self-Image and World-view of the Bengali Intelligentsia As Found in the Writings of the Mid-Nineteenth Century 1830-1870

Warren M. Gunderson

City College of New York

1. Introduction

The conflict between tradition and modernity is the dominant theme in much of the literature on cultural change in India and other non-western societies. Pictured as distinct cultural types, the traditional and the modern inevitably clash. The "traditional" society: static or cyclic, otherworldly, self-denying, irrational or mystical, distinguished by an unspecialized, locally self-sufficient, and underorganized economy and unstable and despotic political systems — is the exact opposite of the "modern" society: dynamic, progressive, this-worldly, acquisitive, rational, marked by a high degree of economic specialization, interdependency, and organization, and whose characteristic political features are the nation-state, the rule of law, and bureaucratic institutions.[1] Over the past two centuries, this modern culture, spread by the awesome economic and political power of the west, has gradually undermined traditional culture. Societies shut their doors, individuals procrastinate or evade, in vain. The coming of modernity and the conflict inherent in that coming, is inevitable, irresistible, and overwhelming. Necessarily, then, and even allowing for varying responses and individual initiatives, change means "pressure in set directions".[2]

The business of the historian is to record the appearance, spread and effects of the modernizing pressure. Modernization is what is important. When he has described this, he has described the history of society. Ideally, his account will be arranged in a linear sequence: the progressive development of modernity. To the extent that the real situation does not follow the ideal model, he will have to account satisfactorily for the deviation.[3] If he finds "traditional" features surviving, he sees them as dead, or dying, leftovers.[4] Modernization is a one-way street. Its progress is irreversible.

In non-western societies undergoing modernization, the western-educated individual plays a crucial role. Himself the evidence of change, he is also its agent in the process of diffusion through the rest of the society. Of all the people in the society, it is he who feels most acutely the burdens of living in a transitional age, torn between two opposing worlds. His life is a series of ambiguities. Even his manners and dress are potential sources of conflict. He is unable to know his own mind, or decide on a course of action. His new knowledge has both excited and debilitated him. He is a marginal man, tormented by problems of personal identification and conflicting loyalties.

When I began my studies, I accepted in a general way this portrait of the non-western intellectual. Increasingly I have come to doubt its accuracy as a description of cultural change in nineteenth century Bengal.[5] This paper argues, that Bengali intellectuals responded to the challenge of a new cultural situation in ways which were rational and realistic. They developed an outlook which favoured cultural change and modernization and which gave legitimacy and respectability to their own positions. While there were shortcomings and inconsistencies in the positions they took, there seems to be no evidence that these were any greater or more unusual than those which ordinarily confront intellectuals. I argue my case from an examination of the literature of the mid-nineteenth century; the first question is how Bengalis regarded the age in which they were living, and the second, how they viewed themselves and their work. The third section attempts to show some of the intellectual problems they encountered. And the last suggests some reasons for the success Bengalis achieved in dealing with the problems of modernization. Throughout I have preferred to let Bengalis speak for themselves, on the grounds that much of our feeling for a situation results from the particular words and phrases people use. Before proceeding, one or two preliminary remarks seem in order.

It is customary in histories of modern India to divide the nineteenth century at the Mutiny. No doubt this makes good sense for the history of northern India (and of British rule), but in Bengal the Mutiny, though important, does not mark a major turning point. The period here considered is that from about 1830 to 1870. Only in the late 1820's does the portrait begin to emerge of an intellectual elite, articulating a world-view and self-image through the press and cultural societies. At the other end, by the early 1870's the social composition of the elite was changing and new attitudes were emerging which significantly altered the Bengali outlook and gave a new direction to cultural activity. Although many of the old images survived (and still exist today), there is a clear shift in emphasis.

A more serious problem is whether a literature, written by only a few, can be regarded as a valid source for the views of a more general public. This issue is complex; but it should be immediately pointed out that this paper is concerned primarily with the views and ideas of the intellectual community. The opinions quoted in it are certainly not a reflection of peasant views, and probably not of the wealthiest class. Secondly, one of the strengths, from this point of view — as well as one of the weaknesses — of the literature of the time is that it is so largely concerned with contemporary problems. Much of it is didactic: particularly well suited for the kind of analysis I am trying to make.

Finally, and this point deserves emphasis, Bengali intellectuals of the period in question did not constitute a separate group or class. It is difficult to talk about an intellectual elite as distinct from an economic or social or political elite. The differentiation of elites, itself a characteristic of modernity, was a process only beginning in the nineteenth century. The society did not provide sufficient opportunities for full time intellectual employment, as writers, artists, professors, etc., and few Bengali intellectuals would have wished to take such positions had they been available. Rather, these were ambitious and worldly men, anxious for material gains: landowners, merchants, government officials, and professional men. Their intellectual work occupied only part of their time.

To a conference on Bengali literature, it may seem strange that so many of my sources are in English. It should be remembered that at least until 1850, and perhaps still later, the bulk of the writings these men produced were in English. But let me follow my own principles, and turn to a Bengali source. "When we have spoken of the Bengali writers of the century," Romesh Chandra Datta wrote,

> "we have given only a partial and imperfect account of our country's progress. Englishmen are now the rulers of India, the work of administration and of the courts of justice is carried on in English, higher education is imparted in English. . . . Much of the literary work . . . must therefore be done, and has been done, in English, . . . and even scientific and historical researches . . . must be conducted in English."[6]

Finally, I have not attempted to present a complete description of the many facets of the Bengali outlook in the nineteenth century, but have only tried to argue a particular case.[7]

2. The Character of the Age

In 1829, the great reformer, Rammohan Rāy, reviewing the many changes at work in the world, concluded: "It is a dawn of a new Era."[8] For Bengali intellectuals in the nineteenth century the truth of his remark was beyond dispute. Forty years later Bankimcandra Chatterjee recalled those same days when "new light" had shown on Bengal, a "new dawn of life."[9] For Kṛṣṇadās Pāl, it was a "golden age": "the commencement of an intellectual and moral revolution."[10] Rājnārāyaṇ Basu asserted that it marked the beginning of a "social reformation";[11] while Keśabcandra Sen called the age an era of "revolutionary reform -- of thorough-going radical reform".[12] "There is not the least doubt," Debendranāth Ṭhākur (Tagore) told the Tattvabodhinī Sabhā in 1839, "that today knowledge has increased and the darkness of ignorance in the mind of the people of this country has been largely driven out."[13] After a long period of social neglect and mental stagnation, "a better day had . . . dawned."[14]

Men saw themselves standing on the threshold of a new age of progress and reform. Behind them was the old world with its inhumanity, ignorance, and indifference; ahead was the new with its learning, power and vistas of unlimited progress.

> We have been in our day a learned nation, and there are still a few learned men among us, but science has been overwhelmed with a rapid succession of barbaric governors, and the light of learning nearly extinguished. Now however we trust its embers are reviving, and that we shall become powerfully a learned people.[15]

But to live in an age of transition, to use a favorite phrase, presented many difficulties and required great skills. We can better see the "new spirit" of defiance if we look first at the image Bengalis had of the old world of orthodoxy they were leaving behind.[16]

The old world was not a happy one. "The peninsula", as one writer described it, "presented one unbroken surface of ignorance, dense, appalling ignorance".[17] For Kiśorīcād Mitra, the past was a time when "ignorance and superstition reigned rampant."[18] Elsewhere, he wrote,

> the Hindu social fabric at the beginning of this century [was] in a miserable state. We see it based on a debasing cruel superstition; and supported by the power of a handful of Brahmans. We see caste separating class from class. . . . We see the whole body of the people sunk in a state of mental and religious bondage. In the course of half a century, the strongholds of a superstition, which had exercised boundless dominion over even the most elevated minds among the Hindoos, have been stormed and rendered untenable.[19]

Bengalis held that three groups, the priests, feudal zamindars, and the Muslim rulers, were responsible for the low state into which the country had fallen.

> The priest, one writer claimed, sowed the seeds of division, alienation, disorder, and anarchy, dissevering the joint and aggregate interest of the commonwealth into separate and jarring elements, connected with the rivalry of clanship, and the hostility of religious sectarianism.[20]

The rule of the landlord was "feudal", and "tyrannical and cruel".[21] Finally, the Muslim rulers put an end to a flourishing culture and brought bigotry and misgovernment to Bengal.

> The Mahomedans introduced into this country, all the vices of an ignorant, intolerant, and licentious soldiery. The utter destruction of learning and science was an invariable part of their system, and the conquored no longer able to

> protect their lives by arms and independence, fell into the opposite extremes of abject submission, deceit, and fraud.[22]

At a dinner held in his honor in London, Dvārkānāth thanked his host for having delivered his country from "the tyranny and villany of the Mahomedans".[23]

If the Muslim kings were a part of the old world, the British rulers were intimately a part of the new. It was their coming which had launched India into the modern world. "The British conquest of Bengal was not merely a political revolution," Romesh Chandra wrote,

> but brought in a greater revolution in thought and ideas, in religion and social progress. The Hindu intellect came in contact with all that is noblest and most healthy in European history and literature, and profited by it. The Hindu mind was to some extent trained under the influence of European thoughts and ideas and benefited by it.[24]

Many writers saw a larger force at work:

> Providence has an object in view in sending the English. It is no less than the improvement of the human species, the great final end of man's life and toward which everything tends. . . . The final cause of the advent of the English in India is to improve the country and the people, and to forward the progress of mankind towards perfection. They are the destined instruments in the hand of Providence.[25]

In a speech in London, Keśabcandra Sen expressed the quintessence of the Bengali view of their immediate past and present position in language which, if too florid even for that age, was not essentially different.

> When India lay sunk in the mire of idolatry and superstition, when Mahomedan oppression and misrule had almost extinguished the last spark of hope in the native Indian mind, when Hinduism . . . had degenerated into a most horrid and abominable system of idolatry and polytheism, when the priests were exceedingly powerful, and were revelling in their triumph over down-trodden humanity, the Lord in His Mercy sent us the British nation to rescue India. (Cheers) In obedience to God's injunction, England came and knocked at the doors of India, and said, "Noble sister, rise! thou hast slept too long." And India rose. The invitation was providential, and the response too. India rose from her lethargy of ages. . . .[26]

At first the English had been slow to take up their burden: the early rulers were little better than the Muslim officials they displaced. There was much corruption;[27] and many Company servants abused their privileges, and spread terror and fear, like "that infamous governor and bad man" Warren Hastings.[28] It was only with the coming of Lord Cornwallis, the "greatest of the British proconsuls", that England began to fulfill her historic mission.[29] "There was a gleam of sunshine in India after an age of darkness and storms." Cornwallis ended corruption and injustice, reformed the administrative system, and brought order and honor to British rule. Above all, he instituted

> a Permanent Zemindari Settlement of the land revenues of Bengal, a measure which has done more to secure the property and happiness of British subjects in India than any other single measure. . . .[30]

For nineteenth century Bengalis, the Permanent Settlement was the first great constructive act of British rule. It ushered in an age of prosperity and development which had made Bengal "the granery of the world".[31]

The other great achievement of British rule was the decision to introduce western education and the study of English.[32] It was, to use the words of Keśabcandra Sen, "the flood of western education . . . [that] is sweeping away the accumulated errors and iniquities of centuries."[33] Akṣaykumār Datta pointed to the

> large and increasing number of educated and intelligent natives who . . . were laudably exerting themselves to improve and elevate their country. . . . They had established societies for ameliorating its moral and political condition; they had set on foot the educational institutions for disseminating the blessings of that education which they had themselves received.[34]

Few Englishmen were more widely respected than David Hare, whose name was linked with the establishment of Hindu College and the founding of numerous schools and educational societies. His student, Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, said of him: "When I remember the name of Mahatma David Hare, my heart overflows with gratefulness."[35] Though skeptics had doubted whether Indians would respond to modern knowledge, the educational system Hare and others worked to establish succeeded and proved "the adaptability of the soil of the country to the growth of what has now become a stately tree shooting out magnificent foliage and bearing golden fruit."[36]

Hand in hand with the political and educational changes begun by the British went equally far-reaching improvements in communication and transportation. The introduction of the printing press was hailed as a first step into the new world:

> From that year was Hindoo literature emancipated, and emancipated forever, from the mystification and falsification of the Brahmins. The great event is scarcely

> remembered, and has not been thought worth taking notice of by our historians, though it has done far more for our civilization and well-being than can be hoped for from railroads and telegraphs.[37]

The gains the printing press had given Bengal could be found in the increasing numbers of published books and in the growth of newspapers and journals.[38] Free to publish about government interference, they were the best guarantee of continued progress.[39]

The nineteenth century Bengali marvelled at the revolution transportation improvements were introducing. It was the outward manifestation of the great internal changes he was experiencing. The rate of change perhaps seems slow today, but its signs were unmistakable: in 1839, construction began on the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Delhi; by 1854, the first telegraph line was opened from Calcutta to Agra.[40] But, as in England, the railroad was the most striking sign of change.[41]

Bholānāth Chandra, who travelled widely in Bengal and northern India during the 1840's and '60's, was among the first to recognize the implications of the railroad. During his stay at Ranigunge, he saw the new industrial world the railroad was helping to create: he pointed to the increase in coal production:[42]

1840	15,00,000 maunds
1850	30,00,000 maunds
1860	60,00,000 maunds

and predicted that the area would develop into the Manchester of India. There was, he felt, an intimate connection between the railroad and the growth of national life.

> Day by day is the dominion of mind extending over matter, and the secrets of nature are brought to light to evolve the powers of the soil, and make nations depend upon their own resources. The present native cannot but choose to dress himself in Manchester calico, and use Birmingham hardware. But it is to be hoped that our sons and grandsons will emulate our ancestors to have every dhooty, every shirt, and every pugree made from the fabrics of Indian cotton manufactured by Indian mill owners.[43]

But he believed its influence went still deeper: "The Rail turns the course of men, merchandise, and mind, all into new channels."[44] The railroad is a moral as well as a physical force.[45]

Progress, advancement, improvement: these were the watchwords of the age. "There is nothing in status quo in the universe," Rājendralāl Mitra observed, "Change is the law of existence."[46] But not random or unintelligible change: change forward, progress -- this is the law of life. "Progress is . . . a necessary condition of creation. . . . The course of nature is perpetual development."[47] Kisorīcā̃d Mitra proclaimed:

> Progress is the law of God, and cannot be arrested by puny efforts of man. As knowledge is acquired, facts accumulate and generalization is practiced, skepticism arises and engenders a spirit of inquiry, resulting in the triumph of truth.[48]

Education, books, railways, and the Permanent Settlement: all were manifestations of the spirit of progress and served its ends. This spirit has a life and a force of its own; even the all-powerful English cannot resist that spirit or turn it from its goals. "The final cause of the advent of the English in India," said Giriścandra Ghoṣ, with an implicit warning,

> is to forward the progress of mankind towards perfection. They are the destined instruments in the hand of Providence for this great work. As well might the mouth refuse to munch its food as they refuse to do their appointed work. It must be done. Nothing can prevent it. The march of civilization throughout the world is forward . . . and India cannot stand still . . . the progress of improvement cannot be stopped. . . . Government may continue or refuse its aid towards the enlightenment and education of the people of this country, but the taste for liberal ideas once imparted cannot be destroyed.[49]

For Bengalis, progress was the rule of the universe, and the age of progress had dawned on India. Although the British had to a large degree initiated, and would continue to assist, the idea of progress, Bengalis themselves must devote their energy and talent to the great task of improvement in the service of the progressive realization of the spirit of progress. How they proposed to do this is our next subject.

3. The Self-Image

The first thing to be said about the Bengali self-image is that Bengalis worried about it. The writing of the time is full of thoughts about the new social classes, Bengal society, and the tasks ahead. Prompted perhaps by the suddenness of their emergence as an influential group, Bengali intellectuals wondered who they were, and what they were doing. Moreover, what little self-confidence they felt was regularly challenged by the British. Bengalis faced much criticism -- and often hostility and ridicule -- from individual Englishmen and in the English press; and apparent indifference from the Government.[50] For these reasons, Bengalis devoted much effort to defining -- and defending -- their role and their task.

The intellectuals usually saw themselves as a new social group: the rising middle class. Rammohan Rāy, in the passage quoted earlier, refers to this new middle class group which, previously unknown, has sprung into existence "placed between the aristocracy and the poor and . . . daily forming a most influential class."[51] Hariścandra Mukhopādhyāy also stressed in his reading of recent history the rise of the middle class, and the importance of its needs.[52] The division of society into three groups was generally accepted. According to Śiśirkumār Ghoṣ, Bengali society was made up of the upper class or zamindars, the middle class or gentry, and the lower class or peasants.[53] Prasannakumār Ṭhākur stated, "Indian Native Society was divided, like that of other civilized countries, into the higher, the middle, and the lower class."[54]

The term, middle class, so widely accepted and used, was, in fact, a convenient designation which covered all sorts of persons: an umbrella under which the urban-dwelling, educated Bengali, regardless of his income, status, or aspirations, could find shelter. I have discussed elsewhere the complex social situation of the new educated elite in nineteenth century Calcutta;[55] here I wish to deal with the implications for conduct of the middle-class ideal professed by Bengalis: what does it mean to be middle class? how does the middle class man act, and to what does he aspire?

For a small group, "middle class" meant primarily employment in business and professional occupations. Dvārkānāth Ṭhākur, himself a famous and wealthy merchant, hoped that his son might follow in his footsteps.[56] Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ told a friend that he hoped to become "an independent merchant -- an honorable profession, the prospect of which thrills me."[57] What these men said and did to make business a respectable occupation, other men did for the professions. Prasannakumār Ṭhākur was praised by his contemporaries as one who had helped to establish law as an honorable and dignified profession, which even the scion of a very wealthy family could follow without suffering a loss of dignity.[58] Similarly, the examples of Hariścandra Mukhopādhyāy and Giriścandra Ghoṣ helped to raise journalism to a high status.[59] The careers and attitudes of such men seem to be truly middle class: that is, they look very much like the Indian counterparts of the middle class of nineteenth century England.[60] However, the majority of men who called themselves middle class, or who were regarded as middle class, aspired to a higher status. They saw their middle class position as a rest station on the way to the aristocracy.

The career of Digambar Mitra illustrates this type of middle-class, educated Bengali. His grandfather is said to have accumulated a modest fortune as a banian to an English mercantile firm, which he left to his three sons and which Digambar's father largely wasted.[61] Digambar was raised by an uncle in Calcutta, and educated at David Hare's school and at Hindu College. After brief service in the government as a clerk and later as an amir, he took a post as manager with the Kasimbājār rāj family. During his service, he received a gift from the Rājā of Rs. 1,00,000, which he invested in indigo and silk production.[62] Despite heavy losses in the commercial crisis of 1847, Digambar advanced his fortune through investment in government securities and gradually acquired extensive holdings throughout the province.[63] As a newly-rich, but wealthy landlord, he identified himself with and became a spokesman for the landed aristocracy. He was a leading figure in the British Indian Association,[64] and was several times appointed to the Bengal Legislative Council. The title, Rājā, was bestowed upon him by the British government, and he was also made Commander of the Star of India. Despite his wealth and honors, however, his social position was anomalous; on the one hand, the older aristocracy did not admit him to intimacy, and had channels of its own to government; on the other, he was sharply criticized by educated Bengalis for being a lackey of the landlords.[65] The attempts of men like Mitra -- Rajendralāl Mitra and Kṛṣṇadās Pāl are other examples -- to associate with the older landowning classes were only partially successful.[66] And unlike those who identified themselves directly with aspirations and values thought to be middle class, the aristocratic-aspiring men found it difficult to develop an ideology harmonious with the belief in progress.

The rising middle class identified itself with the "Young Bengal" group of rebellious and progressive Hindu College students.[67] Indeed some, like Ramgopāl Ghoṣ and Pyārīcā̃d Mitra, were themselves members of Young Bengal.[68] Giriścandra Ghoṣ referred to them as the "Young Bengal Class." It was this group Hariścandra Mukhopādhyāy and Śiśirkumār Ghoṣ had in mind when they mentioned the new middle class.[69] Kṛṣṇadas Pāl, more progressive in his younger days, called Young Bengal a "newly-sprung up class" and "a glory to the nation."[70] These middle-class writers helped to keep alive the image of Young Bengal as the "hope of India," and the high point of Bengal's modern development.[71] What they saw in Young Bengal was not so much a specific program for social reform, or even a broader intellectual position; it was their attitude, their new outlook, their spirit of defiance, their demand for the most advanced and radical reforms which attracted the admiration of the middle class. Put beside these students, who personified the spirit of the age, the middle class-cum-aristocrats seemed timid and hesitant. Theirs were not the firm voices of leadership, but "the whisperings of five or six Babus."[72]

The differences in these two images of the intellectual elite — the one identifying with the middle class and Young Bengal, the other calling itself middle class but identifying with the aristocracy -- can be seen in specific political issues. Few questions were of more importance to nineteenth-century Bengalis than the fate of the Permanent Settlement. On this issue, Bengali intellectuals split into two groups: those who supported the interests of the landlords and those who defended the rights of the peasants. The former, through such groups as the Landowner's Association and the British Indian Association, strongly upheld the Permanent Settlement -- the Magna Carta of the landlords — and pressed for its extension to other areas of India. Led by articulate spokesmen like Digambar Mitra,[73] Rājendralāl Mitra,[74] and Kṛṣṇadās Pāl,[75] they vigorously opposed official attempts to modify provisions of the Settlement in favor of the peasants. Aspiring aristocrats, often with land holdings of their own, they defended in patriotic language their personal and class interest.[76] On the other side of the argument, we find those intellectuals who admired middle-class virtues: Pyārīcād Mitra,[77] Giriścandra Ghoṣ,[78] and Bankimcandra Chatterjee;[79] all warned against this danger of unchecked landlord power and urged some protection be given the peasants. Although these men appear progressive by the standards of their opponents, they were neither liberals nor radicals. None of them, to my knowledge, ever called for repeal of the Settlement;[80] what they seem to have wanted was, as Śiśirkumār Ghoṣ put it, that they rather than the landlords, should speak for the peasants.[81] They did not go so far as to suggest that the peasant speak for himself.

The expression middle class, then, as used by Bengali intellectuals to describe themselves, masked significant differences in ideals and behavior. Here I have focused on the one that stands out most clearly in the literature. Doubtless there were others: differences in caste, family, locality, religion, occupation, which also deserve investigation. It would be wrong, then, to leave the impression this division between aspiring aristocrats and solid middle-class individuals is the only significant difference. It would be equally wrong to assume that every person belonged exclusively to one camp or the other. For example, Kṛṣṇadās Pāl as a young man was a strong supporter of Young Bengal, but later in life supported the conservative landlord interests.[82] Moreover, there were times when intellectuals forgot their differences and drew closer together. In the 1840's, for example, when Christian proselytizing seemed a threat, men of all shades of opinion rallied to the defense of Hinduism.[83] Similarly, Young Bengal and the landowners joined to form the Bengal Indian Association in 1851, influenced by the desire to present a united front when the subject of the renewal of the East India Company's charter came before Parliament.[84] Such united efforts were unusual; competition rather than co-operation was the usual rule. Although this competition -- a subject of bitter complaint[85] -- hindered the development of a common front among the intelligentsia it should not be forgotten that in the last analysis the intellectuals, whatever their aspirations or specific views, very often wanted very much the same things.

Middle class meant different things to different people; that a middle class was developing none denied. Similarily, though leaders did not always agree on specific issues, that they should raise the issues was indisputable. They were leading Bengal, and India, into the new age. As one of the Young Bengal put it, "A people can never be reformed without noise and confusion."[86] Educated Bengalis must join in the great work of reform and advancement; they must give progress a helping hand:

> . . . every individual member of the community [has] the duty of doing all in his power to ameliorate the condition of the people, and to advance the general prosperity of this country.[87]

At the first annual meeting of the Calcutta School Book Society, the directors reported with pride:

> *When encouraged by European example, cooperation and condescension*, the opulent and learned natives evince a laudable willingness to aid in the efforts making to improve the conditions and character of the inhabitants of this country.[88]

At the head of the long list of needed improvements came education.

Concern for education lay at the heart of the Bengali self image. Bengali intellectuals ordinarily called themselves the "educated natives," "learned natives," or the "educated middle class."[89] In a practical, as well as intellectual, sense, education was the passport to success.[90] To be educated was a mark of status and respect.

Bengali intellectuals were particularly concerned with the state of higher education. They regarded the continued expansion and development of the schools and colleges offering western education through the medium of English as essential. In the face of demands -- mostly from Englishmen -- for more primary schools and greater use of the vernacular languages, they affirmed their belief in the diffusion theory, popularized by Lord Macaulay.[91] "The education of the upper ten thousand," Kiśorīcād Mitra insisted,

> must precede that of the lower myriad millions. The lower strata of the social fabric must be penetrated through the upper strata. That the downward process of filtration has commenced, is evidenced by the number of schools which have been established and are supported by educated and opulent Natives.[92]

Feelings on education, always high, became markedly warmer as a series of statements and events in the 1850's suggested that the British government was becoming increasingly hostile to the expansion of higher education and, indeed, to the educated classes generally.[93] The close co-operation between Indians and Englishmen which had characterized early efforts in education gradually disappeared.[94] The first indication of change was the government's decision in the early 1850's to assume direct operation of the Hindu College, changing the name to Presidency College and opening the school to non-Hindus.[95] The principle of grants-in-aid incorporated in the Wood Despatch was believed to be a concession to missionary interest, and another sign that the government was no longer sympathetic to the interests of the educated classes.[96] The dispute which led to the resignation of Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar, in 1858, as Principal of Sanskrit College seemed to be yet another indication of the hostility of the bureaucracy.[97]

In the face of this hostility defense of the existing educational system became of paramount importance. "Good learning, means Western learning," and Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, opposing a proposal to introduce Oriental learning into the curriculum of the University of Calcutta.[98] Educated Bengalis also fought hard to maintain English as the language of instruction. Rājendralāl Mitra reminded his listeners of the practical and intellectual virtues of English:

> If we are . . . ourselves to represent our wants and feelings, our grievances and prayers, to the rulers of the country; if it is an object that members of our community should enter the Civil Service, if it is an honorable ambition in our young men to enter the Bar; . . . if it is desirable that [we should have] medical men; . . . if India is to produce her Arkwrights and Stephensons, we must know English as thoroughly as Englishmen . . . English is the 'open Sesame.'[99]

Moreover,

> It is the language of Milton and Shakespeare, of Newton and Bacon, of Locke and Hume, it is the language of a noble host of physicists of the present century who have . . . changed the face of civilization in Europe. Can you afford to give up such a language for the poems of Kritibas and the doggrels of Kavi-kankan, or even for such sloppy translations as you can produce from year to year? If you can, I shall deeply regret your choice, for it would amount to an intellectual suicide.[100]

Another indication of the importance Bengalis gave to education was the high rank among their heroes of men like David Hare, Alexander Duff, Rammohan Rāy, and Henry Vivian Derozio, all of whom were closely associated with education.[101] Societies for the promotion of schools and of school books also received attention.[102] Indeed, a striking feature of virtually every society and organization, educational or otherwise, was the emphasis its members placed on progress and development. Apparently, very few organizations of a purely social or recreational character were established.[103] These intensely earnest men seem to have had little time for, or interest in, relaxation. A brief glance at the aims and purposes of some of the organizations of the mid-nineteenth century suggests the spirit behind them.

In 1851, the Bethune Society was founded "to promote among the educated Natives of Bengal a taste for literary and scientific pursuits, and to encourage a freer intellectual intercourse."[104] "The object of the [Bengal Social Science] Association," its organizers stated,

> is to promote the development of social progress in the presidency of Bengal, by uniting Europeans and Natives of all classes in the collection, arrangement, and classification of facts bearing on the social, intellectual, and moral condition of the people.[105]

In the same vein, the founders of the Bengal British India Society declared that "every individual member of the community [has] the duty of doing all in his power to ameliorate the condition of the people, and to advance the general prosperity of this country."[106]

Even religion and literature should serve the cause of progress. In the early 1830's, the Young Bengal group seized upon Hinduism with a vengeance. "A nation can never be reformed without noise and confusion," the Young Bengal newspaper, Enquirer proclaimed.

> We have undertaken this task . . . Blessed are we, that we are to reform the Hindu nation. We have blown the trumpet, and we must continue to blow on. We have attacked Hinduism, and will persevere in attacking it, until we finally seal our triumph.[107]

By the early 1840's, as we have seen, educated opinion shifted. Debendranāth Ṭhākur took the lead in expressing concern over the Young Bengal attacks on Hinduism. They did not understand, he told his listeners, that Hinduism meant more than idolatry and superstition. If only they could hear the truth they would not have to turn to other religions for answers. "In this way," he concluded, "we can perserve our Hindu religion."[108] There were, of course, flaws in the Hindu way of life -- the great work of social reform and female improvement must continue[109] -- but Hinduism itself rested on unshakeable foundations. Debendranāth's attitude, with its mixture of personal piety and practical concern, was typical of many nineteenth-century intellectuals.

Literature too must be pressed into the service of progress. The vernacular language, Bengali was inferior in depth and breadth to Sanskrit, and must be developed through the use of Sanskrit vocabulary to the point where it is capable of sustaining high moral and philosophical discourse.[110] Equally important, the language must be improved as an instrument of popular communication, "to foster a healthy domestic literature in Bengal."[111] The Māsik patrikā. the famous journal of Pyārīcād Mitra, proclaimed in its first number: "This journal is published for the ordinary person, especially for women. We propose to write it entirely in the language of ordinary conversation. Learned pundits who want to read it will, but this paper is not written on that account."[112] Bankimcandra Chatterjee argued that progress could only come with the development of a popular literature:

> . . . it is only through the Bengali that the Bengali can be moved. We preach in English and harangue in English and write in English, perfectly forgetful that the great masses, whom it is absolutely necessary to move in order to carry out any great project of social reform, remain stone-deaf to all our eloquence. To me it seems that a single great idea, communicated to the people of Bengal in their own language, circulated among them in the language that alone touches their hearts, . . . will work out grander results than all that our English speeches and preachings will ever be able to achieve.[113]

Thus Bengali intellectuals undertook to create both a language and a literature to serve their purposes.[114] Theirself-conscious attempt to structure and use language is one of the most striking features of nineteenth-century literature.[115]

The same attitude of serious, high purposefulness, so evident in religion and literature, carried Bengalis naturally into politics, and when government performance did not keep pace with — and even seemed to oppose -- Bengali aspirations, turned Bengalis into members of the opposition. They did not preach disobedience or defiance (though some Englishmen thought so).[116] On the contrary, they felt British rule was best for India. "No Hindu in Bengal would for a moment wish to see our present Government changed," Rājendralāl Mitra proclaimed. "On the whole, India never had a Government so good."[117] Similarily, Prasannakumār Ṭhākur stated: "If we were to be asked, what Government we would prefer, English or any other, we would, one and all reply, English by all means, ay, even in preference to a Hindu government."[118] Nonetheless, political reform was an essential element of progress, and must go hand in hand with reforms in other areas.[119] Moreover, though the British government was a great government and guided by "the most advanced principles of liberality, . . . it is a bureaucracy."[120] Its officers were more concerned with smooth operation of administration than the needs of the country, and too involved in the affairs of English politics. Mitra went on to complain that the needs of India were increasingly being ignored. He told his audience that, though they would be cursed and despised, they must speak. They had "a sacred duty to present the interest of 200,000,000." Sustaining this intellectual commitment to politics were the very practical, and very important issues we have already mentioned: the Permanent Settlement and education. By the 1870's these too had become political questions, as hostility between the government and the intellectuals grew. Increasingly, all roads led to politics.

The growing consciousness of educated leaders that the government was no longer sympathetic to their aspirations gave great stimulus to political activity. A frequent theme in newspapers and books is the absence of sympathy for India and Indians among Englishmen of the present day, in contrast to the warmth shown by earlier generations. The Orientalist school, represented by men like Sir William Jones, the great 18th century scholar and founder of the Asiatic Society, and H. H. Wilson, the famous Sanskrit scholar, historian, and first Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University; and the liberal humanitarians — the Bentincks and the Macaulays, had differed on many points of policy, but both groups had shared a warm interest in the educated classes and their continued growth. But by the 1850's, Englishmen had very different views. Bholānāth Chandra put the matter this way:

> . . . on the issues of the question in dispute between Sir William Jones and Mr. [James] Mill, depend the most important political results. The one labored to eradicate from the minds of the governors the false and pernicious notion that the governed were an illiterate and barbarous people, — and to inspire each with a mutual appreciation of the other, to cement themselves into a loyal nation round a parental throne. The other labored to lower the ruled in the eyes of the rulers, and to inflame the minds of each with a mutual hatred of the other, till things tend to a crises, called by the terrible name of rebellion.[121]

The government suffers from the practice of exclusiveness. "We are not represented in the Government," Giriścandra Ghoṣ noted. "The greatest distrust prevails between the governors and the governed."[122]

On virtually every issue government seemed to oppose the interests of the intellectual community. As early as the 1840's Bengalis had asked for more Indian appointments to the civil (then, Company) service.[123] When these were not forthcoming, leaders expressed dissatisfaction and warned of the dangers for themselves and the country:

> In a country like this, and under a government such as they had it was impossible to expect native talent and native genius to be appreciated and promoted. They were not living in a free country, or under a representative government. He [Rā[illegible]gopāl Ghoṣ] did not fault . . . the existing rule; perhaps it was the best that they could have under present circumstances; but with an exclusive civil service and no outlet for a career there was no stimulus to exertion.[124]

But though leaders like Ghoṣ protested, and though the British Indian Assocation regularly petitioned for more Indian appointments, and after the introduction of competitive examinations, for simultaneous examinations in India, the government remained indifferent. Indeed, in an obvious attempt to limit Indian candidates, the upper age limit for the examination was lowered from twenty-three to twenty-one to nineteen.[125] The dismissal of one successful candidate, Surendranath Banerjea, from the Indian Civil Service for a relatively minor infraction confirmed Bengali suspicions of the ill intent of the government (and, incidentally, gave the nationalist movement one of its greatest leaders).[126] Another evidence of government hostility was the failure to promote Indians in the Service to high positions. Bankimcandra Chatterjee, one of the first two graduates of the University of Calcutta, served for thirty-three years as deputy magistrate and deputy collector, without any promotion in rank despite an excellent service record.[127] It is true that efforts were made to increase the Indian members of the administration and to enlarge the Indian element in the legislative councils, but the appointments were given not to members of the intelligentsia, but to trusted landlords and princes.[128] The government's attitude to the educated classes had changed from one of friendliness to one of hostility.

To the frustrations of Bengali interests in politics and administration were added setbacks in education, revenue, and civil rights.[129] The administrations of Sir George Campbell (Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, 1871-74) and of Lord Lytton (Governor-General and Viceroy of India, 1876-80), took stands on so many matters of vital concern to the educated classes, which called into question not merely the legitimacy of their demands and aspirations, but their very existence as a group. Giriścandra Ghoṣ has observed -- " . . . government seems to have been frightened by the shadow of its own creation. It recoils in fear from its own handiwork."[130] If Professor Martin is correct in asserting that most of the Governors-General after the Mutiny followed policies aimed at reducing and curtailing the power and influence of the educated classes, Ghoṣ's statement is essentially accurate. In attempting to eliminate the educated classes — Macaulay's folly" one official called them — as a political factor they succeeded, though not in the way they expected. The princes and landlords did not respond to call. Instead leadership passed into the hands of other members of the intelligentsia, whom the British were to find much more difficult to work with than the moderate political leaders of the mid-nineteenth century.[131] The intellectual's perception that the attitude of his British rulers was hostile, coupled with his unrealized, and now he feared, unrealizable, demands, created a new political climate in Bengal.[132]

Thus far we have discussed the optimistic and confident view which Bengali intellectuals had of their age, themselves, and their future. The unwillingness of the government to help fulfill this view was, of course, a cruel blow. But even before this political obstacle rose, many writers had expressed doubts about themselves. Were they really the modern, progressive men they imagined themselves to be? Perhaps the government was right. Perhaps Young Bengal was not worthy of equality. To this undertone of doubt -- the fear that reality did not match the high ideals -- we now turn our attention.

4. Myths and Realities

What sort of creature was Young Bengal? Bholānāth Chandra compared him to a greedy rājā of Hindu legend, who by rigorous austerities had managed to reach heaven. There he was booted out by Siva, who had no patience with scoundrels, and remained suspended half-way between heaven and earth. This was the position of the Young Bengal: suspended half-way between the heaven of his rulers, and the earth of his orthodox countrymen.[133] The old order was no more; the Brahman, tyrant and dictator of India, was dead and gone. But what had taken his place? Do we want, Chandra asked, to hand the country over to the "fast money-making and money-expending Kayust?"[134]

The Young Bengal had moved too quickly from one world to another. He had learned many new things, but he had picked up many bad habits.[135] He was too weak and ineffectual; he preferred talk to action; and soft luxury to hard work.[136] He lacked the character and manliness, and the energy and enterprise of the Englishman. Yet he imitated blindly English and western ways, and was ready to abandon everything Indian.[137] This was not true independence, but only another form of slavery. Young Bengal had thrown off the trappings of the old world, but lacked the discipline and maturity to live in the new.

This new man was a favorite target of wit and satire. First exploited by Bhabānīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, in his Kalikātā kamalālay [Calcutta: Dwelling-Place of the Goddess of Wealth], (published in 1823), the rich, half-educated Bengali became a stock figure in the literature. Michael Mudhusūdan Datta's brilliant play, Ekei ki bale sabhyatā? [Is This What Is Called Culture?] (1859), is one of the finest examples of this type; while Kālīprasanna Siṁha's Hutom pyācār nakṣā [Sketches of a Watching Owl] (1862), witty and sometimes salacious, also strikes home.[138] A book of a much different type, didactic and moralistic, Pyāricād Mitra's Ālāler gharer dulāl [The Spoilt Son of a Rich Family] tells the story of two sons, Matilāl and Rāmlāl.[139] Matilāl, spoiled by a doting father and raised by a knavish tutor, goes to Calcutta, falls into the company of gamblers and thieves, and eventually is arrested in a brothel. He loses his wealth and good name, but in the end, after a long series of misadventures, is saved through the devotion of a sādhu at Banaras. On the other hand, his 'good' brother Rāmlāl, raised by a devoted tutor, is the personification of virture and goodness. In the final scenes of the book he forgives and takes back his now-repentant brother. To most educated Bengalis, the Matilāl's outnumbered by far the Rāmlāls.

For many the worse fault of the new educated man was his lack of national feeling. Giriścandra Ghoṣ complained of would-be reformers who ran down everything Indian without appreciating any of the virtues of Indian life.[140] Bholānāth Chandra feared that "in one or two more generations it would be difficult to trace any of the original features of our native character."[141] Akṣaykumār Datta wrote, in the influential Tattvabodhinī patrika, that the western-educated man was coming to despise his country, his language, and his culture; he had become denationalized.[142] To these men, Macaulay's aim — to form "a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect" — was being effected too well. They wanted something more than pale imitation.[143]

Not all educated Bengalis agreed with this indictment. Rājendralāl Mitra, obviously disturbed by this line of thought, replied with a spirited and passionate defense of the culture of the intellectuals:

> They say that our Bengal system tends to anglize us. If they mean thereby that we learn to think like Englishmen; if they mean that we try to make our civilization progressive like that of Englishmen; that we wish our countrymen should rise above the idols of custom and prejudice; that we long for the day when they should rend assunder the bonds of ignorance and priest-craft, I plead guilty to the charge, and most devoutly wish that every man in India may think and act like us; and be guilty in the same way. But if by Anglicism be meant an insensate aversion to all that is indigenous -- a neglect of our language and our country; if it be meant that by learning English we denationalize ourselves, the charge is false and calumnious.[144]

Here Mitra defends not merely the actions of specific individuals, but the total cultural pattern of the intellectual. Yet perceptive observers saw flaws in that culture, just as they saw flaws in individual behavior.

One of the most persistent criticisms of Bengali society concerned factionalism and factional strife. In his editorials in the Hindoo Patriot and, later, the Bengalee, Giriścandra Ghoṣ consistently deplored the dissensions within the Hindu community. On his death, he was praised as a man free from petty sectional and private interests.[145] Rājendralāl Mitra observed that it was lack of unity which had cost India her freedom nine hundred years ago and from which she was still suffering.[146] There was among Indian leaders evidence of a "jealous meanness," which put personal concerns ahead of the public interest.[147] As a result of this factionalism, societies and organizations rarely enjoyed a long life. In a letter to his friend Gobindracandra Basāk, Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ complained of growing personal divisions in the Young Bengal cultural organization, the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge. A short time afterwards the Society ceased to function.[148] Similarly, Rabindranath Tagore reports in his *Reminiscences*, that when he asked Bidyāsāgar to join a newly-founded Literary Academy, the latter refused, remarking, "My advice to you is to leave us out — you will not accomplish anything with big-wigs; they can never be got to agree with one another."[149] Though a number of important men joined, Rabindranath goes on to say, "To be plain so long as this academy lived Rājendralāl Mitra did everything single-handed. . . . It did not prove possible to get the big-wigs to do anything." On his side, Rājendralāl Mitra led a small group out of the Bengal Social Science Association, in a dispute over the aims and purposes of that organization.[150] Clearly, then, men were not devoting themselves wholeheartedly to the public good. Societies and organizations which proclaimed noble ends often turned out to be controlled by a small faction, usually a family, sometimes a single man. The relationship within the group was one of leader and followers.[151]

Caste and family matters was another area in which there seemed to some a sharp discrepancy between belief and practice. Though men proclaimed themselves members of the middle class, progressive in their outlook, they continued to follow caste and family customs.[152] As Bholānāth Chandra stated: "Young Bengal filibusters about intermarriage, but nevertheless the antipathy between a Kayest and Bunya is as strong as between a Hindo and a Mussulman."[153] Elsewhere, he added:

> . . . a native may read Bacon and Shakespeare, get over his religious prejudices, form political associations, and aspire to a seat in the legislature — he may do all these and many things more, but he cannot make up his mind to board at an English hotel, or take up a house at Chowringhi [then, a very fashionable residential street in Calcutta, favored by Europeans; Chandra uses it to refer to the general area of European residence]. Ethnologically, he is the same with an Englishman . . . Morally and intellectually, he can easily Anglicize himself. Politically, he may, sooner or later, be raised to an equality. But socially, in thought, habit, action, feelings, and views of life, he must long measure the distance that exists geographically between him and the Englishman.[154]

Not only did caste continue to play an important role in everyday life, there is some evidence that it was becoming a matter of even greater concern. In 1855, Rājnārāyaṇ Mitra published a three-volume work, *Kāyastha kaustabha*, a collection of biographical sketches of leading Kāyasthas. He also published for a time a journal *Kaustabha kiraṇ*, to support his contention that Kāyasthas were high-caste Kṣatriyas, and not subservient or inferior to Brahmans.[155] These publications, the first of the stream of caste journals and associations which appeared in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, seem to have been directed towards two ends. First, and most obviously, they were attempts by members of caste groups to use their newly-found political and economic power to raise their positions in the traditional social hierarchy. Secondly, as British courts began to rely more on the formal śāstric law and less on local tradition in interpreting the law, each local caste group sought to identify itself with the higher varṇa, i.e., Kāyasthas wanting to be judged by Kṣatriya law rather than Śūdra law.[156] Thus as the cultural and economic circumstances of caste groups changed, their caste status became a matter of important concern.

The intellectual community carefully scrutinized legislative proposals effecting caste and family affairs. Indeed, few issues aroused more controversy or generated as much heat. Twice Rādhākant Deb, head of the Sobhābājār rāj family, organized movements against social reform legislation. When Lord Bentinck declared the practice of satī illegal in 1829, Rādhākant played an active part in leading the opposition, submitting a petition and appealing the decision to the Privy Council in London.[157] Again in 1858, following passage of the widow remarriage act, Rādhākant submitted a petition, bearing 36,763 signatures, opposing the act.[158] It is doubtful whether any other act of government passed in the nineteenth century aroused as much agitation, and oppostion, as this one.

Nineteenth-century practice, then, did not match nineteenth-century behavior. Beneath the confident optimism of the age ran a strong undercurrent of criticism, which increased in intensity as the decades passed. By the 1870's, the culture which Rājendralāl Mitra had so passionately defended was disappearing. In its place new cultural patterns were emerging which were more assertive and more aggressively national. Whereas men like Mitra championed co-operation with the British in the cause of improvement and were skeptical of the value of many Indian institutions in the new age, new men appeared on the stage who were much more skeptical about the value of co-operation with the British and who proclaimed the usefulness of many Indian customs and institutions. The old culture did not disappear at once, of course, and many of its supporters lived on, and some of its ideas persisted; nonetheless, the framework for intellectual and cultural discussion was significantly altered. We can see the first signs of the new cultural pattern in the writings of three important men: Bholānāth Chandra, Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, and Bankimcandra Chatterjee. Each, in his distinctive way, helped to establish a new ideology.

Bholānāth Chandra championed the cause of economic development and self-sufficiency. In a series of articles published in the early 1870's, he blamed the British for the poverty of India. He held that British commercial policy had led to the decline of manufacturing in India, and advocated the establishment of a national society for the promotion of commerce and industry. He also called for the establishment of a protective tariff to assist India's infant industries. If the British government refused to respond to the country's pressing needs, Chandra urged that a boycott of British goods be introduced. Finally, Chandra demanded a new attitude of independence and self-sufficiency from the people: "Let us always remember," he said,

> that the progress of India rests with the people themselves, and that her material prosperity must spring from their own energy, perseverance and self-reliance than from any modification of the existing laws.[159]

His emphasis on economic development as crucial was in itself a distinctive feature, and his call of boycott, though this later became a common practice, was an entirely new element. In his willingness to defy the British openly in this way, in his appeal directly to the people, Chandra departed from the thinking of a majority of his contemporaries.

Bankimcandra Chatterjee's contributions were published in the same journal, Mookerjee's Magazine.[160] In an article called "The Confessions of a Young Bengal," Bankim expressed a number of ideas which became basic themes in his later writings. Bengalis, he insists, are becoming rapidly Anglicized. In their manners and customs, their speech and dress, they have become pale imitations of Englishmen. English education is rapidly destroying Hinduism and the Indian way of life. "English civilization has pulled down the three hundred and thirty million deities of Hinduism, and set up, in the total space once occupied by them, its own tutelary deities, Comfort and his brother, Respectability."[161] He goes on, to the effect that the only value that counts in the country today is money. But India must have something more than that; there must be firm moral foundations if she is to thrive. Bankim deplored the tendency to support reforms without any regard for their consequences. Fine phrases like "progress" and "independence of character" cannot hide the fact that if you destroy the joint family system and caste, you must put something in their place. The values which are good for Englishmen are not necessarily good for Indians. Indians must find their own culture.

Lastly, it was Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, remembered as one of the first nationalists,[162] who was able to weave these various themes into a single message.

In the concluding section of his address on the founding of Hindu College, he said:

> Much good has resulted from English learning. But thus far the true fruits of English learning have not ripened. The true fruits of English learning will ripen when, like Englishmen, we gain physical strength, courage, perseverance, determination, and love of independence. The true fruits of English learning will ripen when we are able to establish all [our] schools independently, when we adopt independent means of educating [our] women without depending on Christian ladies,

> when we are able to find joy in the national strength of our literature without imitating English poetry or novels, when we are able independently to do research and make discoveries in science, when we earn our own livelihoods independently, that is, when we develop [our own] commerce and arts, when we are able to shape a new society protecting our national customs without imitating blindly English politics. We will not be able to rest until, not content with sending petitions and childishly weeping to government, we are able to take up the reins [ourselves].[163]

Although not all of these sentiments were new, their expression together was. Moreover, they began in the 1870's to find a receptive audience.

Two important cultural changes seem to have contributed to the development of new attitudes and their popularity. The first change, which we have already noted, was the growing hostility of the government to the educated community. The government's unwillingness to work with, and failure to respond positively to the demands of, the intellectuals both undermined the position of moderates who urged co-operation and stimulated those who turned away from government. The second significant change is more difficult to document. About the 1870's, there seems to have developed a change in the economic position of the intelligentsia, which caught many of its members in an economic squeeze. On the other hand, the value of land, which had risen steadily for nearly a century, stabilized, suggesting that supply and demand were in balance and that investment in land was leveling off.[164] A second factor, stressed by many authors, which contributed to growing economic pressure, was the expansion of the number of educated persons beyond the number of available positions.[165] While this theory is open to a number of objections, it may help to explain the growing nationalism of the educated classes.[166]

By the 1870's, then, the intellectual attitudes and cultural situation of the early part of the century were being sharply modified in the direction of a more nationalistic, less-cooperative, culture which, while still confident of progress and reason, was less certain of what progress meant and whether reason required the abandonment of everything Indian.

5. Conclusions

To the reader acquainted with the history of Victorian England many of the ideas and attitudes discussed in this paper must seem familiar. Bengali and English writers alike believed in the certainty of progress, were confident that reason could solve all human problems, and expressed faith in the value of work. The same buoyant spirit of optimism pervades the literature of both cultures. There is the same feeling that mankind stands on a threshold of a new age, that it has been liberated from the past with all its backwardness and barbarity, and that it will now progress, as it were, beyond history; this, ironically, in an age of great historial discovery and growing historical consciousness. English and Bengali writings both convey the sense of movement, of new worlds to conquer, of infinite expansion. Even in some of the less obvious undercurrents of thought, we sense a similarity of outlook and feeling. The sense of doubt and uncertainty — especially about religion — is there. Debendranāth Ṭhākur worried about Hinduism just as Charles Kingsley worried about Christianity. Hinduism produced its first missionaries! The intellectuals shared less appealing qualities: frequent dogmatism and rigidity in thought, an underlying emotional admiration of force, and a love of hero-worship.

In pointing to these parallels, I do not wish to suggest that the two cultures were essentially the same. Clearly, the changes in England were much greater and far deeper. The Bengali found too little in the world about him to justify the degree of self-confidence exhibited by the Englishman. He was often on the defensive. Confronted by the easy superiority of his English rulers, he seemed at times ready to accept as his own his superior's evaluation of him. He believed in his own inferiority. On the other hand, there is little evidence to show that the Bengali intellectual held the Englishman in high esteem. Though British rule might be necessary for India, though it offered many opportunities for employment and advancement, though outward deference and respect were essential, Bengalis do not seem to have felt any great affection for British rule. They shared much in common — more than either realized, perhaps, but the distance between the two groups was difficult to bridge. If the Bengalis were on the whole less certain of themselves, they were also troubled, in a way the British were not, by the large number of innovations which were foreign in origin. As the writings of the later critics suggest, suspicions ran strong that progress might be anti-Indian. There is evidence, then, of the kind of ambivalence described at the beginning of this paper.

Nonetheless, innovation did take place. To assert, as some writers have done, that innovation was mere borrowing, or that

> Almost all the important [Bengali] writers . . . were liberal humanitarians, radicals, and reformers whose principles were a diluted version of the principles prevailing in contemporary England.[167]

is to fail to see that these actions were at least as much creative as imitative. Bengali intellectuals did not borrow everything, but only the things which they believed suited their needs. Surely these comments by Sir George Sanson on Japan apply equally well to Bengal:

> The fact that the Japanese exercised a choice between European models and did not follow any one of them exclusively tends to show that neither their political nor their economic development conformed to a theoretical pattern such as is postulated by some modern historians. Indeed, the chief interest of the study of Japanese history in its early 'modern' period lies in its divergence from what is regarded as normal . . .[168]

Bengali intellectuals showed an ability to borrow selectively, to incorporate new forms and ideas, without ceasing to be Bengalis.[169] Again, a remark of Sansom's is apropos: "The true interest of the events [of mid-nineteenth century Japan] . . . emerges when they are studied as evidence of the way in which a society can decay and renew itself without changing its essence."[170]

The other weakness of the assertion is that it neglects the parallels between English and Bengali culture. If Victorian ideas found a home in India, it is partly because, in fact, the two countries were both undergoing rapid change. What the industrial revolution was doing for England, the coming of the west was doing in another way for India. In both societies, new social and intellectual groups were emerging, confident, assertive, demanding their right to be heard, especially in politics. What Bengalis asked for, in the main, were the same privileges Englishmen claimed for themselves. In this sense, once the reforming zeal of Macaulay and Bentinck was gone, the real traditionalists in India were the British. Much more than the Bengalis, it would appear, they resisted change and tried to perpetuate the image of a timeless, unchanging society.

Nineteenth-century Bengali culture had many Victorian characteristics, and not a few of its deficiencies. One senses generally a lack of interest in things not immediately practical or without direct practical consequences. Though there was a great interest in education, learning was neglected. Knowledge was important only when it produced direct results; philosophy and metaphysics attracted little attention, history was interesting, especially if it dealt with the glory of ancient Indian culture, but only to the extent it showed how much more splendid the present was than the past. Art should be admired, but not felt; and should serve utilitarian ends. Bengalis worried too much about religion to think about it intelligently. On the whole, there was a good deal of public posturing: men took positions which were fashionable. One has the feeling Bengalis were telling each other: we ought to be this, we ought to do that. Curiously, we find little in the way of confessional literature. Change was perceived, but not experienced.[171] Indeed, the intellectual's understanding of human emotions, feelings, and character seems very limited. In short, the Bengali intellectual in the nineteenth-century was not so open and receptive as has been imagined; his preconceptions and attitudes shut him off from large areas of human experience and knowledge. He moved in straight and narrow channels.[172]

The Bengali, then, had his emotional and intellectual limitations. A critic might, in fact, go so far as to assert that whatever success the Bengali intellectual enjoyed in confronting modernization was precisely the result of these limitations. This judgment is cynical but even if true, it would further suggest that modernization need not involve the intense pressures and emotional experiences usually associated with it.

I have tried to show that Bengalis responded rationally and with a minimum of difficulty to the problems raised by the coming of the west and modernization. Using diverse materials, they were able to construct an ethic which favored change and reform and which rationalized their own position as cultural leaders. Whatever theoretical barriers to change the traditional culture posed, in practice reinterpretation and readjustment proved possible. I find no evidence that Bengalis were unable to respond to such "untraditional" ideas and beliefs as progress, history, and a this-worldly interest. Where barriers did arise, as for example in caste and family affairs, Bengalis were able to accommodate different cultural styles in their personal and public lives.[173] The problems which arose in the culture had less to do with the intellectual's unwillingness or emotional inability to modernize, or where necessary abandon, his tradition, than with inconsistencies and limitations in the modernizing ethic itself. Finally, these limitations and inconsistencies did not prevent intellectuals from acting; on the contrary, they served as a stimulus to further creative effort.

This study then casts doubt on the usefulness of interpreting modern Indian history as a series of ideological and intellectual clashes between modernists and traditionalists culminating in the progressive achievement of modernity. This view is questionable both because of its assumption of upward linear movement, and because it overestimates the role of ideology. On the first point, not only do there seem to be fairly clear stages of development, and a wide variety of opinion at any given stage, but there is no reason to assume that the most recent is the most advanced or superior. Even allowing that in history one thing leads to another, it is difficult to accept the thesis that the new is somehow better. Here I suspect the cultural historian has made a false analogy with the social sciences, especially with economics, where development and growth can be charted and measured in statistical ways. While this approach may be useful to the cultural historian in certain areas — role specialization, for example -- it is doubtful whether he can rely exclusively, or even mainly, on quantitative analysis. His judgments are more matters of aesthetics than statistics.

The related assumption that an individual's response to the modernizing situation reflects the degree of progressive (and morally acceptable) — as opposed to the traditional (and retrograde) -- modernity he has achieved seems equally dubious. If we take the case of Rādhākānt Deb, for example, we find he has been strongly criticized by historians as "traditionalist" or "orthodox" in his approach.[174] In his leadership of movements against the abolition of *satī* and widow remarriage, there is no reason to assume, *a priori*, his orthodoxy. In Bengali society, the family, not the individual, was the significant unit, forming a corporate structure. Any change in the status of widows, especially allowing them to remarry, would have profound effects on that structure. It is conceivable that Deb may have seen this consequence, and doubted the wisdom of the legislation. Again, as head of the Sobhābājār *rāj* family, the recognized leader of the Calcutta Kāyastha community, Deb may have felt that his position demanded his participation. His stand, then, does not necessarily reflect his "orthodoxy" or "traditionalism." The line of argument he took in both cases was that the measures, however beneficial in themselves, represented unwarranted government interference in purely social matters and established a dangerous precedent. The eradication of social evils should be left, he argued, to the spread of modern education and the working of time. In other respects, Deb was progressive; a leader in education, female improvement, scholarship, and politics.[175] It seems grossly unfair to label him a narrow traditionalist. His case suggests the dangers and oversimplifications that can arise when we try to interpret the actions in purely ideological terms. Surely one of the worst legacies of imperialism is that it often leaves us looking at "native" society through the wrong end of a telescope. The distant view discloses no human beings, only flashes of rhetorical light, rather like particle traces in an acceleration chamber. There is no feeling of depth, of fullness, of human character. Unconsciously the historian takes the view of the rulers that the "natives" are not quite of the same species; and forgets that they have a society and culture of their own, and, like other people, that they try to organize their lives in some meaningful and intelligent manner. The historian needs to get beyond this sort of two-dimensional history of stick figures responding this way and that to outside impulses and give us a picture of real men confronting real problems.

6. Some Comparisons

I have argued that Bengali intellectuals in the nineteenth century faced the issues of modernization in rational and enterprising ways. It remains to suggest some of the reasons for their success in view of the problems and tensions which have confronted modernizers elsewhere.

In the first place, it must be remembered that the problems of modernization did not come all at once to Bengal. We do not see, as we do in China and Japan, a conscious attempt to limit contact with the outside world, or shut it off altogether. To the extent that the world "impact" suggests a sudden, striking force, it is clearly wrong to talk about a western "impact" on India. It might be better to look at the relationship as a series of "impacts" or, perhaps better, "encounters" over a long period of time.[176] In the case of Bengal, the eighteenth century was the great period of economic and social upheaval; in the nineteenth century, the intellectuals worked amid conditions of peace and prosperity.[177] The sudden violence and upheaval of modernization in China and Japan does not seem to have been a part of the Indian experience.[178]

Secondly, for many intellectuals modernization was highly profitable. Rewards came in the form of government employment, service in the professions and as agents to large landlords, and in the fields of education, journalism, and politics. There are many opportunities to gain wealth, and with wealth, enhanced social prestige. A way of life which offered so many advantages was bound to prove attractive; conversely, when opportunities began to contract intellectuals expressed growing dissatisfaction with the dominant cultural pattern. Moreover, to the extent that intellectuals could feel themselves as part of a group and an historical movement they could better manage their personal lives. They had acquired a sense of identity, of which modernization was the hallmark.[179] Again, increased economic pressures, and persisting internal feuds, tended to weaken the sense of identity.

British rule, in both a positive and negative sense, must be counted a factor in explaining the successful Bengali response to modernizing pressures. On the positive side, British rule had one overriding virtue: it settled at once the question of whether or not change was necessary. Intellectuals asked how they should act, not whether or not they should act at all. The response of the intellectuals to the Mutiny is instructive. Unlike their counterparts in northern India, Bengalis saw at once the futility and hopelessness of the rebel cause and had no doubt about the outcome.[180] Too, the British rulers for a time took the lead in introducing modern education and reforms, and in encouraging, and rewarding, Indian participation.

Even more important, perhaps, were the unintentional effects of British rule. The successive governors-general who developed the administrative system had no other purpose but to create an efficient and workable government; they gave India a modern bureaucracy. The judges who cited Manu and other ancient Indian legal authorities were, quite to the contrary of their intentions, giving India a modern legal system. The efforts of governors-general after the Mutiny to check the progress of the educated classes, only increased national sentiment. In resisting proposals for reform and modernization, they unwittingly played into the modernizers' hand. Innovation could now be called patriotism, and the British labeled villains who opposed progress. Lastly, the fact of British rule probably helped to give a strong practical character to Bengali thought and activity. Change is perhaps easier to deal with when it is presented in terms of specific measures and immediate steps.[181]

Several features of traditional Indian society may also help to account for the relative ease of change in the nineteenth century. As a result of them the western impact did not have, at least initially, the sort of jarring impact it had elsewhere. For Hindus, at least, there was no distinctive political structure for the British to destroy.[182] In China and the Islamic world, where there were strong loyalities to the institutions of the emperor and the khalif respectively, the coming of the west posed an immediate challenge to the whole political order.[183] In India, where basic political loyalties and systems were local, British rule did not seem an immediate danger to their operation.[184]

The excellent bureaucratic system which the Mughal emperors had constructed was in rapid decline in the eighteenth century. Whatever loyalty men gave to the system seems to have largely disappeared in Bengal by the time of British rule. It is not uncommon in the history of many great nineteenth-century families to find a grandfather or great-grandfather who served in the Mughal administration, and whose son held a similar post under the British.[185] In the absence of any strong ties to the Mughals, it was easy to see the coming of the British as one set of foreigners replacing another.[186]

In a more general sense, the presence of large numbers of Muslims in India had already opened the country to the influence of another great civilization. Indians had learned that although their culture had a place for everyone, not everyone cared to belong; another great civilization had its own attractions. Thus, unlike the Chinese who remained in splendid isolation until the nineteenth century, confident of the superiority and universality of their culture, Indian intellectuals suffered from no such illusions.[187] The interaction between the Islamic and Indian traditions in the subcontinent made it easier for intellectuals to react to the west. There were, I think it fair to say, substantial differences in the Indian reaction to the west; this however was not because the west was alien, but because it was modern.[188]

In accounting for the ease of change, the place of Hinduism also deserves brief discussion. The absence of strict doctrinal prescriptions and of a centralized organization in Hinduism lessened the possibility of an open clash with Christianity. Unlike Muslims, Hindus did not see in Christianity anything which could not be assimilated or made acceptable in Hindu terms. The great range of freedom of organization and belief which Hinduism permits, indeed encourages, allowed intellectuals to form societies like the Brahmo Samaj, both Hindu and modern at the same time.[189]

Finally, in considering the case of Bengal, it is perhaps well to remember that much of the literature picturing the non-western intellectual as a marginal man torn between tradition and modernity concerns itself with individuals who have lived in the twentieth century.[190] We may wonder whether the alienation these men have experienced is a result of their situation or their age. The nineteenth-century thinker, no matter how profound his despair, believed in progress and reason, and accepted the possibility of ultimate truth. It is just these things — reason, truth, progress -- that many twentieth-century men have come to doubt.[191] They have lost the sense of certitude. Finally, we may ask whether, influenced perhaps unduly by the powerful literary heritage of existentialism, we have not overemphasized the whole problem of alienation and dissociation in modern man. The problem seems a perennial one for intellectuals, who manage to keep busy in spite of it.

Time, practical advantages, British rule, the absence of strong and conflicting indigenous traditions, past experiences in dealing with foreign civilizations, the richness and diversity of Indian civilization, and the spirit of the age all help to explain the ability of Indian intellectuals to respond effectively to the challenges raised by the western coming and beginnings of modernization. I would add another factor: the perception, intelligence, and ability of the intellectuals themselves. It seems remarkable that despite many disadvantages and their own shortcomings, they were able to define clearly the problems they faced and propose rational solutions.[192] I think it is for these qualities that they will be remembered longest.

NOTES

[1] This contrast is developed at greater length by Milton Singer, "On the Modernization of Cultural Traditions", (Paper read at conference on "Social Structure and Social Change in India: Methods and Results", University of Chicago, June 3-5, 1965; mimeo), pp. 1-6. The precise terminology varies from author to author.

[2] Lucian W. Pye, Politics, Personality, and National Building: Burma's Search for Identity, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), p. 11. See also F. S. C. Northrop, The Meeting of East and West, (New York: Macmillan, 1946), Chapter 1.

[3] For example, the phenomenon of cultural revivalism is often puzzling to the historian. He sees it not as an aspect of modernization, but as a reaction against it. See Stephen Hay's account in Sources of Indian Tradition, ed. by W. T. de Bary and others, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 705.

[4] Caste is the best documented case, for India, of a cultural leftover. In "Caste in Modern India", Journal of Asian Studies, XVI:4 (August, 1957), pp. 529-48, M. N. Srinivas attacks the popular belief that caste is disappearing. Rather, he presents evidence to show that in some respects it is becoming even stronger.

[5] The particular question in my mind was history. How, I wanted to know, did a people whose lack of historical feeling was notorious react to a culture which was highly conscious of history? The answer, greatly oversimplified of course, is that they started writing history.

[6] R. C. Datta, Cultural Heritage of Bengal, (2nd ed.; Calcutta: Punthi Pustak, 1962), p. 154. The book, based on articles written in the early 1870's, was first published in 1877 under the title, The Literature of Bengal. A revised edition appeared in 1896. The publishers of the present edition, for reasons best known to themselves, have provided a new title.

[7] Many of the ideas presented in this paper grew out of discussions with Professors Marc Galanter, of the University of Chicago, Paul Brass, of the University of Washington, and Ralph Nicholas, of Michigan State University. An early version of the argument was presented in Professor F. G. Bailey's seminar at the University of Chicago in 1964, and I learned much from the discussion which followed. I am very grateful to all these gentlemen. The research presented in this paper

was gathered in India under a grant from the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

[8] Bengal Herald, June 13, 1829, qu. P. C. Ganguli, "Raja Rammohan Rāy", in Studies in the Bengali Renaissance, ed. Atul Chandra Gupta, Jadavpur: National Council of Education, Bengal, 1958), p. 14.

[9] "A Popular Literature for Bengal", Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, IV (1870), p. 42. In The Literature of Bengal, p. 90 Romesh Chandra Datta began his account of the nineteenth century with the words, "We now enter upon the brightest period in the annals of Bengali Literature."

[10] Hindoo Patriot, January 21, 1858, qu. Ram Gopal Sanyal, The Life of the Hon'ble Rai Kristo Das Pal Bahadur, C.I.E., (Calcutta: Ram Coomar Dey at the Bengalee Press, 1886), pp. 197, 196.

[11] Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, Se kāl ār e kāl [Yesterday and Today], ed. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy, and Sajanīkānta Dās, (Calcutta: Baṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1956/7), p. 2. Except for very common names (Rammohan Rāy, Romesh Chandra Datta), I have followed the ordinary transliteration system used for Bengali names, omitting the vowel a when it is not pronounced. ব where pronounced is represented by the symbol b, otherwise v. In bibliographic citations the form used in the source will be followed.

[12] Keshub Chunder Sen in England, (3rd ed.; Calcutta: Navavidhan Publication Committee, 1938), p. 89. He spoke in 1870.

[13] Debendranāth Ṭhākur, Ātmajībanī, ed. Satīscandra Cakrabartī, (3rd ed.; Calcutta: Visvabhārati Granthalaya, 1927), pp. 68-9. A 1912 edition of this book is entitled Jīvana Carita. Unless otherwise noted, the translations in this paper are my own. There is also an English translation of this book, The Autobiography of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, ed. Satyendranath Tagore and Indira Devi (Calcutta: S. K. Lahiri & Co., 1909).

[14] Akṣaykumar Datta, "Address at the [David] Hare Memorial Meeting", June 1, 1845, qu. Peary Chand Mittra [Pyāricā̃d Mitra], A Biographical Sketch of David Hare, (Calcutta: W. Newman & Co., 1877), p. 98.

[15] Mittra, pp. 6-7.

[16] The terms were used by Surendranath Banerjea to describe the contrast in his own family between his grandfather and his father, see A Nation in Making, (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 2. The word transition was frequently used to characterize the age. One of Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy's early essays was called "The Transitional State of the Hindu Mind". See George Smith, "The First Twenty Years of the Calcutta Review, LIX (July, 1874), 125-6. Another writer who frequently uses the word is Bholānāth Chandra. For example, see The Travels of a Hindoo to Various Parts of Bengal and Upper India, (London: N. Trübner and Company, 1869), I, 193.

[17] Giriścandra Ghoṣ, *Selections from the Writings of Grish Chunder Ghose*, ed. Manmathanatha Ghosh, (Calcutta: The Indian Daily News Press, 1912), p. 6.

[18] As quoted by James W. Furrell, *The Tagore Family: A Memoir*, (2nd ed.; Calcutta: Printed by Thacker, Spink & Co., 1892), p. 30.

[19] "The Hindoo College and Its Founder", address read June 2, 1861, in Mittra, Appendix, p. xi. Kṛṣṇadās Pāl called the chief characteristics of the old age misgovernment, ignorance, superstition, and idolatry. Sanyal, p. 45. "Time was," said Akṣaykumār Datta, "when Hindus were so utterly incapable of appreciating the utility of public works that they would not have subscribed a pice to promote them." Mittra, p. 98.

[20] Dakṣinārañjan Mukhopādhyāy, "Administration of Criminal Justice in Bengal", *Calcutta Review*, VI (1846), pp. 134-5. On the "villany of the priesthood", see Rājendralāl Mitra, *An Introduction to the Lalita Vistara*, (Calcutta: Printed at the Baptist Mission Press, 1877), p. 17.

[21] Gobindcandra Datta, in *Bengal Harukuru*, March 2, 1843, qu. Bimanbehari Majumdar, *History of Political Thought from Rammohan to Dayananda: 1821-1884*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1934), I, 117.

[22] Dvārkānāth Ṭhākur (Tagore), *The Englishman*, December 6, 1838, qu. K. C. Mittra (Kiśorīcād Mitra), *Memoirs of Dwarkanath Tagore*, (Calcutta: Thacker Spink & Co., 1870), p. 60.

[23] K. C. Mittra, p. 94. The same theme of the British as deliverers of Bengal from Muslim tyranny is prominent in the writings of Rammohan Rāy. See, for example, "Final Appeal to the Christian Public in Defense of 'The Precepts of Jesus,'" *The English Works of Raja Rammohan Ray*, (Allahabad: Published by the Panini Office, 1906), p. 874.

[24] Datta, p. 90.

[25] Giriścandra Ghos., *Selections*, p. 121. See also B. Chandra, Travels, I, 229; and Rājendralāl Mitra, *Speeches by Raja Rajendralal Mitra, L.L.D., C.I.E.*, ed. Jogesh Mitra, (Calcutta: S.K. Lahiri & Co., 1892), p. 65.

[26] *Keshub Chunder Sen*, p. 90.

[27] Chandra, *Travels*, I, 279.

[28] Rājendralāl Mitra, *Speeches*, p. 6.

[29] *Hindoo Patriot*, February 14, 1856, Giriścandra Ghoṣ, *Selections*, p. 196.

[30] Romesh Chandra Datta, *The Economic History of India*, ("Classics of Indian History and Economics"; New Delhi: Publication Division, Government of India, 1960), I, 6. (A reprint of the 2nd ed. of 1906;

1st ed. published in 1901.) Writing at the turn of the century, Datta expresses a view common throughout the nineteenth century. See below, pp. 136-137.

[31] Chandra, *Travels*, I, 64-5.

[32] Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, p. 1-2; and Debendranāth Ṭhākur, p. 69, among many possible sources.

[33] *Keshub Chandra Sen*, p. 197.

[34] Akṣaykumār Datta, *loc. cit*.

[35] Rājnāraýāṇ Basu, *Hindu athabā presidensī kalejer itibṛtta* [The History of Hindu or Presidency College], ed. Debipada Bhaṭṭācāryya, M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 1956/7), p. 4. According to newspaper accounts nearly 5000 Indians attended his funeral. On his tombstone they recorded their feelings in these works:

" . . . He adopted for his own the country of his sojourn and cheerfully devoted the remainder of his life with unswerving zeal and benevolence, to one pervading and daring object . . . the education and moral improvement of the Natives of Bengal. Thousands of whom regarded him in life with filial love and reverence and lament him in death as their best and most disinterested friend who was to them even as a Father . . . " P. C. Mittra, p. 81. His brother Kisorīcād Mitra said of Hare, "His indefatigable exertions to promote our moral and intellectual elevation cannot be sufficiently appreciated". p. 99.

Other Englishmen hailed for their role in social and educational reform were Lord William Bentinck, Lord Macaulay, and Charles Trevelyan. See Rājendralāl Mitra, *Speeches*, pp. 166-7, one of many sources. The name of William Wilberforce should also be included. Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ, among others, strongly admired his work. See, for example, the reference in his "Diary", in Ram Gopal Sanyal, *A General Biography of Bengal Celebrities*, (Calcutta: Uma Churn Chuckerbutty, at the Herald Printing Works, 1889), I, 185. Wilberforce was one of the founders, in 1821, of an organization called the "British India Society" to promote the intellectual and moral improvement of Indians. See *Calcutta Journal and Monthly Register*, XII (1821), 82 and ff. When Ghoṣ and other members of the "Young Bengal" group started a political society in 1843, they called it the "Bengal British India Society".

[36] Kisorīcād Mitra, "On the Progress of Education in Bengal", read July 24, 1867, *Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association*, I, (1867), p. 54. Giriścandra Ghoṣ contrasted the British initiative in education with the ruler's inaction in the old days when "schools were not considered a necessary element of good Government". *Selections*, p. 7.

[37] Bholānāth Chandra, *Travels*, I, 14. See also I, 229.

[38] The Calcutta School Book Society was founded in 1817 for the dissemination of school books. For a contemporary assessment, see

P. C. Mittra, pp. 52-68. The progress of the Society can be followed in the annual *Reports*, 1818-76, published together in one volume in 1876.

On the publication of Bengali works, see the four catalogues -- not one as many writers suppose -- compiled by James Long: (1) *A Descriptive Catalogue of Bengali Works containing a classified list of Fourteen Hundred Bengali Books and Pamphlets which Have been Issued from the Press, During the Last Sixty Years*, . . . (Calcutta: Printed by Sanders, Cones and Co., 1855), (2) *A Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons connected with Bengali Literature* ... *And a Catalogue of Bengali Newspapers and Periodicals*, . . . (Calcutta: Thos. Jones, "Calcutta Gazette" Office, 1855), (3) *Returns relating to publications in the Bengali Language, in 1857 to which is added, a List of the Native Presses, with the Books Printed at each*, . . . *with a notice of the past Condition and future prospects of the vernacular Press of Bengal*, (Calcutta, 1859), and (4) *Descriptive Catalogue of Vernacular Books and Pamphlets* . . . *to which is added a list of Vernacular Works sent from the Agra Presidency and a list of Works published in 1865 in North Western Provinces*, (Calcutta, 1867.) For a list of newspapers published during the period, see R. N. Bose and H. W. B. Moreno, *A Hundred Years (sic.) of the Bengali Press*, (Calcutta: H. W. B. Moreno, at the Central Press, 1920), pp. 19-85; and Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy, *Bāṅglā sāmayik-patra*, (2nd ed.; 2 vols; Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1947-1953), I, 32-220; II, 1-5.

[39] K. C. Mittra, *Dwarkanath Tagore*, pp. 42-7. Dvārkānāth owned several newspapers; B. Majumdar, p. 252, paraphrasing Dvārkānāth Vidyābhūṣaṇ.

[40] T.G.P. Spear, ed., *Oxford History of India*, (3rd ed.; Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1958), pp. 643, 661. In 1860 Bholānāth Candra made a hurried trip from Calcutta to Agra, leaving on October 19, and arriving in Agra on the evening of the 30th, with only rest stops along the way. He traveled by rail, steamer, and stagecoach. *Travels*, I. His account, written in the late 1860's, begins with a description of a journey of 1845. "This is now so far back as to seem quite in the 'olden time'", he writes. (p. 1.).

[41] Spear, pp. 660-1. Binay Ghoṣ stresses the importance of technological developments as a factor in the Bengal "Renaissance", *Bidyāsāgar o bāṅgalī samāj* [Vidyasagar and Bengali Society], (Calcutta: Bengal Publishers, 1957/8), I, 18-20.

[42] Chandra, *Travels*, I, 170.

[43] *Travels*, I, 169. In fact, the Indian cotton industry had already begun.

[44] *Travels*, I, 162. Chandra follows the statement with a passage from Macaulay on the influence of the railway.

[45] Contrary to the popular notion, Bengalis and other Indians were

quick to take advantage of the new railway system. Giriścandra Ghoṣ reports find great crowds at the Booking Office and a long line at the 3rd class window. Selections, pp. 57-8; while Candra claims at the Calcutta suburbs, like Chandranagore, on the west bank of the Hooghly are reviving as a result of the railway. Morris David Morris has pointed out that the first railways were built on the assumption that Indians for caste and other reasons would not travel. As he notes, this proved wrong, and passenger revenue quickly became a major source of revenue. The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India: A Study of the Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1947, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 1.

[46] Speeches, p. 203. Resistance, he remarked rather sadly in this case, the question under debate being proposed changes in the Hindu marriage system, "is not in accord with the supreme law of nature".

[47] Giriścandra Ghoṣ, in the Calcutta Monthly Review, May 1858, quoted in Selections, pp. 126-7. He questioned whether the progress begun by education could never be halted, p. 118.

[48] "On the Progress of Education in Bengal", loc. cit., II, 64-5. Hariścandra Mukhopādhyāy complained that the outbreak of the Mutiny had barred for a time "our path of social progress". Hindoo Patriot, December 31, 1857, quoted by Ram Gopal Sanyal, Kristo Das Pal, pp. 190 and ff.

[49] Selections, p. 122. England's own history, he argued, proved his point. " . . . a miracle could not have effected greater changes in the power resources and destiny of the English people, than the steady unobstructed and vigorous action of the great law of progress". p. 127.

[50] Much of the criticism was frankly racist. There were few subjects Bengalis objected to as bitterly as racism, especially prominent in the non-official English community. See the numerous protests Giriścandra Ghoṣ in the Hindoo Patriot and the Bengalee: (page numbers refer to Selections volume) "The White Act Miscalled Black", 91-6; "The Saxon in India", 338-40; "They Hate Us Youth", 433-36; and 2, 16, 168-70, 256-8, 454-8, for a sampling of Bengali feeling. Even moderate Englishmen did not hesitate to denounce Indians and Indian customs: The Friend of India, the great missionary paper published from Serampore -- friendly to Indian interests and widely read among educated Bengalis, regularly referred to them as "the half-educated class", February 12, 1857, p. 146. Commenting the same issue on a protest by the Hindoo Patriot over the refusal to admit Indians to a flower show, the editors wrote, "There shines out the Bengalee. Do nothing yourself. But trust to bravos." p. 150. A justice of the Supreme Court, Mr. J. B. Phear, began an address to the Bengal Social Science Association, "I am afraid that your system of caste has been a frightful nidus of prejudice and bigotry . . . " Transactions, I (1867), 10.

[51] The Bengal Herald, June 13, 1829, loc. cit., p. 14.

[52] Hindoo Patriot, February 12, 1857, qu. B. Majumdar, p. 230.

[53] Amrita Bazar Patrika, September 11, 1873. For other examples see Giriścandra Ghoṣ, "Female Occupations in Bengal", Transactions of the Bengal Social Science Association, II (1868), p. 135; and Kisorīcād Mitra, "On the Progress of Education in Bengal", loc. cit., II, 78.

[54] Qu. by Furrell, p. 106.

[55] "Toward a Sociology of the Bengali Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta", Paper read at the 2nd Conference on Bengal Studies, May 6-7, 1966, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

[56] Debendranāth Ṭhākur, Ātmajībanī, p. 79.

[57] Ghoṣ to Gobindcandra Basāk, November 24, 1839, qu. Sanyal, Bengal Celebrities, p. 180.

[58] Furrell, p. 86.

[59] See, for example, Hindoo Patriot, September 27, 1869; and The Indian Mirror, September 24, 1869, reproduced in The Life of Grish Chunder Ghose, . . . , ed. Manmathanath Ghose, (Calcutta (?): publication data missing from torn title page of my copy), pp. 209-11. See also Chapter One.

[60] On the middle class beliefs of 19th century England, see the excellent study by Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, (New Haven Yale University Press, 1957), esp., on this point, Chapter 8, pp. 183-95.

[61] The account here is based mainly on the very interesting and, by Indian standards, unusually frank biography by Bholānāth Chandra, Raja Digambar Mitra, C.S.I., (Calcutta: Hare Press, 1893).

[62] Chandra, Digambar Mitra, p. 31. There is a story prevalent today in Bengal that Mitra received this gift for helping the then Rājā Kṛṣṇanāth Rāy, when the latter was accused of having beaten a servant to death. Shortly after this incident, the Rājā took his own life.

[63] Like several others, Mitra made a substantial profit by buying heavily discounted government paper in the early days of the Mutiny when prices fell by as much as 30% and selling when the price returned to normal. Chandra, pp. 76-7.

[64] The British Indian Association was established in 1851, an outgrowth of agitation over an attempt by the government to end the "extraterritorial" judicial privileges enjoyed by Europeans in India. This attempt, like others including the ill-fated Ilbert Bill, roused great hostility among the European community, especially the non-officials, and injected racism into political discussions. The Association was intended to draw Indians of all groups and levels into a single political group to represent their interest. Its membership was drawn mostly from the aristocratic looking Landowner's Association (est. 1837), and the middle class "Young Bengal" Bengal British India Society (see above, footnote 35).

[65] Most of the great landlords -- like the Mahārājā of Burdwan, described by Chandra, *Travels*, I, p. 138, as "the oldest and wealthiest Zamindar in Bengal" — had direct personal contacts with important British officials. Garden parties and gala entertainments provided ample opportunity for these very wealthy men to convey their views to the government. The Mahārājā of Burdwan also served on the Governor-General's Legislative Council, along with other important nobility. See B. B. Majumdar, p. 268. For a description of a lavish evening of entertainment held by Pāikpāra *rāj* family in honor of the Prince of Wales, see Hari Mohan Bandyopadhyaya, *A Brief History of the Kandi and Paikpara* Ray Family, (Calcutta, 1907), pp. 85-9. For middle class criticism of men like Mitra, see below, p. 137.

[66] This picture of the ambitious *parvenu* will be familiar to students of western history. However, two phenomena distinguish the Indian case. First, there was no established territorial aristocracy in the English or European sense. Few landed families in Bengal could trace their position back more than a few generations. The rise of the prestigeous Burdwan *rāj* family begins in the late 17th century; most of the other families rose to predominance in the 18th century. On the rise of the Burdwan family, see Narendra Krishna Sinha, *The Economic History of Bengal*, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukopadhyay, 1962), II, 119-20. In a very real sense, as Edward Thompson noted in *The Making of the Indian Princes*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), the British helped to create the territorial aristocracy of India. Caste is the other factor peculiar to the Indian scene. The Burdwan *rāj* family belonged to the relatively low-ranked *khetri* caste; no matter how great its power and wealth, its social ranking was below that of many other castes. I discuss the implications of these phenomena in, "Towards a Sociology of the Bengali Intelligentsia"; here I would stress that his relatively higher caste status combined with the absence of a long-established aristocracy gave a certain logic to the middle-class *parvenu's* expectation that he would be admitted to aristocratic society.

[67] The term "Young Bengal" refers in particular to those Hindu College pupils who studied with and were friends of the dynamic teacher, Henry L. V. Derozio. The best modern account of this group is by Binay Ghoṣ, *Bidrohī dirojīo* [Derozio: the Revolutionary], (Calcutta: Bāk Sāhitya, 1961).

[68] On Ghoṣ see the obituary notice in the *Calcutta Review*, XLVI (1868), pp. 505-525; and R. Sanyal, *Bengal Celebrities*, I, 161-92, including passages from his diary and some letters. On Pyarīcād Mitra, see Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy, *Pyārīcād Mitra*, Sāhitya-sādhak-cāritmālā; Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1955-6).

[69] See above, pp. 132-133.

[70] R. Sanyal, *Kristo Das Pal*, p. 47.

[71] Giriścandra Ghoṣ's expression, *Selections*, p. 122. See also *Keshub Chunder Sen in England*, p. 95; and Kisorīcād Mitra, "The Hindoo College and Its Founder", in P. Mitra, David Hare, pp. xxxi-ii.

[72] Bankimcandra Chatterjee, qu. B. B. Majumdar, p. 473.

[73] Chandra, Raja Digambar Mitra, pp. 178-9, 182-7, and 229-31, gives excerpts from Mitra's speeches. In arguing that the Settlement should be extended to other areas, Digambar's motives, like those of many of his fellows, were not entirely disinterested. He owned large estates in Cuttack district, Orissa, an area not permanently settled.

[74] See Mitra, Speeches, pp. 156-7. Rājendralāl dismissed the ideas behind the Tenancy Act of 1859, which gave the occupying tenant cultivator under certain conditions the right of occupancy, as "rank communistic theories", p. 172. We would argue that in fact the act extended the idea of private property from the Landlord to include the tenant as well. Its aim was fundamentally conservative not radical.

[75] See Speeches and Minutes of the Hon'ble Kristo Das Pal, Rai Bahadur, C.I.E., 1867-81, ed. Ram Chandra Palit, (Calcutta: B. H. Banerjea and Co., 1882), pp. 204-24, and 386-95, for Pāl's speeches in the Bengali Legislative Council on various rent legislation.

[76] It is customary in histories on modern India, to regard statements in defense of the Settlement as selfish and hypocritical. However, Professor Bernard Cohn has pointed out to me that it is possible that those who defended the Settlement were right in their contention that the whole country, including the peasantry, benefited. The fact that there seems to have been during this period fewer outbreaks in Bengal than in Uttar Pradesh or Maharastra lends some support to Cohn's suggestion. In the absence of any systematic evidence, it is impossible to reach a conclusion. We hope this important question will one day receive the attention it deserves. Although many authors discuss the background and events which led to the decision to settle permanently the land revenue, few have written of its effects on Bengal.

As we shall see, even those writers who defended the peasantry were not completely untainted by hypocrisy. They argued that they rather than the landlords could best protect the peasant.

[77] See B. B. Majumdar, pp. 210-1, 214-6.

[78] See Ghoṣ, Selections, pp. 448-9, 668-71, and 687-8.

[79] See B. B. Majumdar, pp. 469-73.

[80] Bankimcandra wrote that if the peasants were given their rights political agitation would resemble the roar of the sea. Though conscious of the "calamities" which had befallen the peasant under the Settlement, and the "oppression" which was his lot, he did not advocate repeal, "he gave no specific suggestions for its improvement". (Rachel R. Van Meter, "Bandimcandra Chatterji and the Bengali Renaissance", [Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, South Asia Regional Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 1964], p. 116.) If the landlords would act like good landlords, and the peasants like good peasants, the problem would disappear, he felt. See Majumdar, pp. 404, 451-2. Equally vague is

Giriścandra Ghoṣ's proposal to make a second permanent settlement with the occupying landlords. Why there would be any need at all for landlords under this scheme is a question he did not discuss. Selections, pp. 668-71.

[81] Śiśirkumār Ghoṣ, Amrita Bazar Patrika, November 4, 1875.

[82] Bholānāth Chandra said of Pāl, "A man of the people by birth, he disappointed his nation by spending his energies in Zamindari [landlord] harness". Life of Digambar Mitra, II, 11, qu. B. B. Majumdar, p. 315. By the same token, Young Bengal, despite its protestations on the peasant's behalf, went only so far in supporting the peasantry.

[83] The conversion--forced, it was alleged--of a young Bengali woman touched off a great agitation in 1845, in which three important groups participated: the aristocrats led by Rājā Radhakānt Deb, Young Bengal in the person of Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ, and the influential Tagore (Thākur) family represented by Debendranāth. See his Ātmacarit, pp. 103-6, for a description of the agitation.

[84] See above, p. 132. The racial agitation surrounding the Black Acts was also a factor. See B. B. Majumdar, pp. 174-85. Unfortunately no modern study of the British Indian Association, or other early political groups has yet been made. A doctoral student at the University of Calcutta, Sujata Ghoṣ, has a dissertation in preparation which should help to fill the gap.

[85] See below, pp. 145-147.

[86] Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy, in the Young Bengal magazine, Enquirer, qu. Binay Ghoṣ, Bidrohī Dirojīo, p. 104.

[87] From a resolution passed at the inaugural meeting of the Bengal British India Society, 20 April 1843, qu. B. B. Majumdar, p. 172.

[88] Calcutta School Book Society, Report, read July 4, 1818.

[89] For "educated natives", see above, p. 11; G. Ghoṣ, Selections, pp. 111-20, 393-6, 639-41, and elsewhere; Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ, Sanyal, Bengal Celebrities, p. 176; Kṛṣṇadās Pāl, Sanyal, Life of Kristo Das Pal, p. 75. For "learned natives" see above. Śiśirkumār Ghoṣ used the expression "educated middle class", B. B. Majumdar, p. 325. The ordinary Bengali expression is "śikhyita lok", educated man. See, for example, Śibnāth Śāstrī, Rāmtanu Lāhirī o tatkālīn baṅgasamāj, [Ramtanu Lahiri and the Contemporary Bengali Society], (Calcutta: New Age Publishing, 1955-6), (first ed. published 1903), p. 48.

[90] We have perhaps cited enough examples of the Bengali belief in the value of education. One proof of its practical importance can be offered here, a look at some of the graduates and students of Hindu (and later Presidency) College during the mid-nineteenth century. The list reads like a Who's Who of Bengali public life: Rāmprasād Rāy (son of Rammohan, and first Indian appointed Judge of the High Court), Kṛṣṇamohan

Bandyopādhyāy, Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ, Debendranāth Thākur, Satyandranāth Thākur (first Indian to enter the Civil Service by competitive examination), Keśabcandra Sen, Mahendralāl Sarkār, Pyārīcād Mitra, Kiśorīcād Mitra, Rājanārāyan Basu, Tārācād Cakrabartī, Bhūdeb Mukhopādhyāy, Dīnabandhu Mitra, Michael Madhusūdan Datta, Gobindacandra Datta Rāmtanu Lāhirī, Digambar Mitra, Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy, Pyārīcaran Sarkār, Dvārkānāth Mitra, Hemcandra Bandyopādhyāy, Nabīncandra Sen, Romeścandra Datta, and Bankimcandra Chatterjee, to mention only a few. See Presidency College, Calcutta, *Centenary Volume*: 1955, (Alipore: Superintendent, Government Printing, 1956).

[91] Evidence of growing interest in primary education can be found in the various government documents beginning with the Education (Wood) Despatch of 1854. See any standard history of education in British India.

[92] "On the Progress of Education in Bengal", loc. cit., II, 78.

[93] In an interesting paper, based partly on private documents, Briton Martin has documented the growing hostility of the British governor-generals and top officials to the educated classes and to the higher education which had produced them. "Attitudes of the British Administrators from Canning to Dalhousie Towards the Educated Classes", Paper read at the University of Chicago, 1964. Martin believes that the British feared the potential political power and influence of the educated classes.

[94] For example, the co-operative founding of Hindu College; see R. C. Majumdar, *Glimpses of Bengal in the Nineteenth Century*, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), pp. 25-8. The close relationship between the Orientalist scholars, who helped to manage and direct the early schools and colleges in Calcutta, is documented by David Kopf, "Orientalism and the Genesis of the Bengal Renaissance", (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1964). A close personal friendship between H. H. Wilson, the famous Sanskrit scholar, and Rāmkamal Sen lasted until Sen's death. For some of their correspondence, see Peary Chand Mitra (Pyārīcād Mitra) *Life of Dewan Ramcomul Sen*, (Calcutta: T. C. Bose & Co., 1880). J. E. Drinkwater Bethune, President of the Council of Education from 1849-51, seems to have been the last of the British officials with close Indian contacts. See Nemai Sandhan Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1960), pp. 145-6, 160. A literary club of educated Bengalis called the Bethune Society, in his memory, flourished for many years. Bose, p. 222-5.

[95] Prasannakumār Thākur, one of the Governors of the College, resigned in protest, Furrell, pp. 103-4. His fear that high-caste Hindus, whose families had built the school, would no longer attend, proved unfounded. In 1858, Giriścandra Ghoṣ reported that proposals were afoot to abolish the College. See *Selections*, p. 123.

[96] S. N. Mukerji, *History of Education in India*, (Baroda: Acharya Book Depot, 1957), pp. 124-49, esp. 127-9 and 135-7. Nonetheless, when

the anticipated dangers did not arise, Bengalis paid warm tribute to the Despatch and to Alexander Duff, the missionary who influenced its writing; see Ghoṣ, *Selections*, pp. 538-9, 682-4.

[97] For details, see Binay Ghoṣ, *Vidyāsāgar*, pp. 63-71. Some of the relevant correspondence is reproduced by Candīcaran Bandyopādhyāy, *Vidyāsāgar*, (3rd ed.; Calcutta: Indian Press, 1909), Appendix, pp. i-ix.

[98] University of Calcutta, Senate, *Minutes for the year 1866-77*, (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1867), p. 53.

[99] Rājendralāl Mitra, *Speeches*, February 27, 1868, p. 17.

[100] *Speeches*, pp. 35-6.

[101] On David Hare, see above p. 132: Duff, p. 29. For Rāmmohan Rāy, see Pyārīcād Mitra, *David Hare*, p. xi; Debendranāth Ṭhākur, Ātmacarit, pp. 59-60; and Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, *Hindu kalej*, pp. 7-11. Kṛṣṇadās Pāl said that at the very mention of his name "the pulse of every true Hindu beats with quick emotion, and his heart leaps for joy". Sanyal, *Kristo Das Pal*, pp. 47-8. Bholānāth Chandra, *Travels*, I, 103, says that it was Derozio "who first planted the seed of reform in the Hindoo mind". Basu, *Se kāl ār e kāl*, pp. 7-11. We also see here another, and less pleasant, aspect of Derozio's influence. For Basu's recollections of his college days at Hindu College, see his *Ātmacarit* [Autobiography], (Calcutta: Orient Book Company, 1961; 1st edition published 1909), pp. 7-30.

[102] The Calcutta School Book Society was established in 1817 to prepare and publish cheap books for use in the schools; Pyārīcād Mitra, *David Hare*, p. 52. The Reports of this Society from 1817-1875 can be found in the National Library, Calcutta. The aim of the Calcutta School Society, founded in 1818, was "to assist and improve existing schools and to establish and support any further schools and seminaries, . . . with a view to the more general diffusion of useful knowledge". See Mitra, p. 53.

[103] Giriścandra Ghoṣ, in 1857, complained of the absence of social intercourse among the educated natives and urged the establishment of a purely social club along English lines; *Selections*, pp. 242-3. N. S. Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, pp. 219-30, gives a convenient summary of some of the principal organizations and societies of the nineteenth century.

[104] *Report of the Bethune Society, from December, 1851 to December, 1852*, (Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1852), p. 1. Dr. F. J. Mouat, Secretary of the Council of Education, who according to Bose, *Indian Awakening and Bengal*, took the initiative in establishing the society, in memory of the late Mr. Bethune, expressed the need for some "means of mental improvement and intellectual recreation" in Bengal. Bose, p. 223. A study of the expressed aims of many of the newspaper published during the period confirms the high seriousness of intellectuals. See B. Bandyopādhyāy, *Bāṅglā sāmayik-patra*, 2 vols.

[105] Bengal Social Science Association, *Transactions*, I (1867), Prospectus, p. viii.

[106] B. B. Majumdar, p. 172. The Society was "to promote the good of India and the improvement, efficiency and stability of the British government".

[107] As quoted by Binay Ghoṣ, *Bidrohī Dirojīo*, p. 104. The editor of the paper was Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy.

[108] *Ātmacarit*, p. 69.

[109] Debendranāth was active in several social reform movements in support of female education and improvement. See Sushil Kumar De, *Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century*, (2nd rev. ed.; Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, 1962), II, 596. See also Jogeścandra Bāgal, Debendranāth Ṭhākur, ("Sāhitya Sādhak Caritmālā, #45", Calcutta: Baṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1939/40) pp. 53-60, 74-7. For other calls to social reform see Hariścandra Mukhopādhyāy in Sanyal, *Kristo Das Pal*, p. 190; *Keshub Chandra Sen in England*, pp. 370-1; Giriścandra Ghoṣ, *Selections*, pp. 503-5; and Jogendranāth Bidyābhūṣaṇ, B. B. Majumdar, pp. 274-5. A good summary of social reform movements is given by N. S. Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, pp. 126-51.

[110] According to James Long, the chief tendency of Bengali style at mid-century was to combine simplicity with elegance: "To take the Sanskrit as the best and most suitable model, yet to write at the *level of the people*". *Returns Relating to Publications in the Bengali Language*, p. xviii. He praised the efforts of Vidyāsāgar who had drawn on Sanskrit to make Bengali "capable of being an *elegant* vehicle for scientific and other information". (p. li). See also Asitkumār Bandyopādhyāy, *Unabiṁśa satābdir prathamārdha o bāṁlā sāhitya* [Bengali Literature and the First Half of the Nineteenth Century], (Calcutta: Bookland Private Limited, 1959), pp. 243-58.

[111] The aim of the Vernacular Literature Committee, established in 1851. Long, *Returns*, pp. liv-lxi, discusses the founding and aims of the society.

[112] *Māsik patrikā*, (Bhadra, 1261 B.S. [1854], p. 1. The second line is a thrust at the pundits who favored a highly Sanskritized style. Sukumar Sen, *History of Bengali Literature*, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1960), p. 189, tells the story of one pundit who summarily condemned a piece by Vidyāsāgar on the grounds that it was quite easy to follow. The *Tattvabodhinī patrikā*, which appeared in 1843, undertook to present a 'dignified' Sanskritized Bengali. Copies of both these journals are available in the library of the Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad in Calcutta.

[113] "On a Popular Literature for Bengal", loc. cit., pp. 37-8. Bankim made the same point later in the first issue of *Baṅgadarśan*.

[114] The attempt to resolve the two types of language favored: the Sanskritic and the popular, became a major concern. According to

Professor Van Meter, Bankimcandra Chatterjee praised Pyārīcād Mitra's novel, Ālāler Gharer Dulāl (first published in Māsik patrikā) for showing (a) that both the Sanskritic and colloquial style could be used where appropriate, and (b) that materials for literary work could be found in ordinary life, and did not have to be drawn from English or Sanskrit sources.

[115] And gives the literature some distinctive characteristics. The didactic, moralizing tone is particularly strong. See Van Meter, pp. 9-11.

[116] See in particular the famous incident involving Captain D. L. Richardson, famed teacher and Principal of Hindu College, who declared a speech by Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy treasonable, and Tārācād Cakrabartī, who made a spirited defense. The Mutiny produced a wave of hysteria among the English community in Calcutta. For Indian reaction--and praise of Canning's restraint, see Giriścandra Ghoṣ, Selections, pp. 262-79, 330-44, and 317-8.

[117] In an address on "The Education Question", July 2, 1870, Speeches, p. 35.

[118] In the Young Bengal journal, Reformer, in 1831, qu. by B. B. Majumdar p. 187. See also Bholānāth Chandra, Travels, I, 279.

[119] Thus Rājendralāl Mitra praised Rājā Rādhākānt Deb for the role of leadership which he played in every movement for the "social, moral, and political amelioration of our race". May 14, 1867, Speeches, p. 12.

[120] Rājendralāl Mitra, Speeches, pp. 147-50, April 10, 1882, addressing the British Indian Association. The paraphrases and quotation which follow are taken from that speech. I have deliberately selected this speech of Mitra's, because it was delivered before a moderate political organization by a cautious political moderate. Mitra was employed by the Government as Director of the Ward's Institution, and received several honors from the Government for his services and achievement as a scholar.

[121] Travels, I, 287. Pages 283-7, he reports several incidents of insulting treatment of Indians by European officials. See also the editorial, "They Hate Us Youth", Giriścandra Ghoṣ, Selections, pp. 433-5.

[122] Selections, p. 64.

[123] In 1843, a resolution was passed urging open competitive examinations for government posts. B. B. Majumdar, pp. 113-4. Tārācād Cakrabartī and Dakṣiṇārañjan Mukhopādhyāy believed increased employment of Indians essential for good government. pp. 113-4, 121-2.

[124] Bholānāth Chandra, Digambar Mitra, p. 1, quoting Rāmgopāl Ghoṣ.

[125] Originally (1853) the maximum age was set at 23. It was lowered to 22 in 1859 to 21 in 1866, and to 19, in 1877. R. C. Majumdar, H. C.

Raychaudhuri, and K. Datta, *An Advanced History of India*, (2nd ed.; London: MacMillan and Co., 1958), pp. 856-7.

[126] See N. S. Bose, *The Indian Awakening and Bengal*, pp. 176-7; S.B. Chowdhury, "Pre-Congress Nationalism", in *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance*, pp. 158-9; Bepin Chandra Pal, Memories of My Life and Times, (Calcutta: Modern Book Agency, 1932), I, 234-44. Pal was a student in Calcutta in the late 1860's and early 1870's.

[127] Rachel Van Meter, p. 95.

[128] Lālmohan Ghoṣ makes this point; see B. B. Majumdar, pp. 268-9. The establishment of a statutory civil service, reserved for Indian appointments is praised by T. G. P. Spear, *Oxford History*, p. 688, as an imaginative act. He fails to see, I think, its retrogressive character so far as the educated community was concerned. Lytton chose his appointments mainly from the princes and large landholders; the scheme proved unworkable and was soon abandoned.

[129] The details of these acts, especially during the administration of Lytton, can be found in any standard history. On Campbell, see C. E. Buckland, *Bengal Under the Lieutenant-Governors*, I, (2nd ed.; Calcutta: Kedarnath Bose, 1902), pp. 484-571. Bengali reaction can be traced in the works cited in footnote 127 above, and in the very important, *Reports of the Native Press*, compiled for use of the government, and available in the National Archives, New Delhi.

[130] *Selections*, p. 123.

[131] On Martin's analysis, see above footnote #9 . On the new leadership, see below, pp. 147-148.

[132] I have stressed the Bengali disappointment with British attitudes out of my belief that the whole approach of the intellectuals depended on co-operation with the British. It was the British unwillingness to cooperate, rather than any particular act, which destroyed the political position of the intellectuals. Given the importance of attitudes, we see how damning to British interests racism was. Racism seemed to confirm the growing belief that Englishmen regarded Indians as inferior and unworthy race. After the Mutiny, it became common to insist Indians remove their shoes before entering a European office or home — kowtow in reverse, as it were. A famous incident occurred in Calcutta in 1874, when Īśvarcandra Vidyāsāgar, the famed scholar and former Principal of Sanskrit College, was denied admittance to the Asiatic Society for refusing to remove his shoes. When it was learned who had been insulted profuse apologies followed, but the incident, not untypical, left its mark. For an account, see Ghos, *Bidyāsāgar o bāṅgālī samāj*, I, 14-6. For many Bengali complaints about racism, see footnote #50 above.

[133] *Travels*, I. 235.

[134] *Travels*, I, 40-1, 321.

[135] Among the vices western-educated Bengalis had acquired, according

252-4, and 267-8.

[148] Letter dated May 17, 1844, in R. Sanyal, Bengal Celebrities, p. 171. The Society was established in 1839. "Ceased to function" is perhaps the best description of the society's last days, as Ghos's letters show, attendance declined, and meetings became less and less frequent until there were none at all.

Letters, and other materials not intended for the public eye, are of course very valuable sources. Regrettably, very little in the way of private records is available for this period. One exception is the letters of Michael Madhusudan Datta, available in various sources, which are very revealing on quarrels and disputes among intellectuals. See, for example, Nagendranāth Som, Madhu-smṛti, (Calcutta: Gurudās Caṭṭopādhyāy, 1954; first published in 1911), pp. 636-663.

[149] Reminiscences, (London: MacMillan and Co., 1961; first published in 1917), pp. 229-30. The Academy enjoyed only a brief existence.

[150] Bengal Social Science Association, Transactions, I (1867), xv-xvi.

[151] I am thinking not only of the Literary Academy, but also of political groups like the British Indian Association, which Bholānāth Chandra claims was controlled for many years by a small group: Digambar Mitra, Rājendralāl Mitra, Kṛṣṇadas Pāl, and Rāmnāth Ṭhākur. He adds that Digambar Mitra's picture has never been hung at the Association offices--though he was President--because of his enemies. Chandra, Digambar Mitra, pp. 252-3. The Adi Brahmo Samaj, a reformist religious group, seems to have been virtually a Ṭhākur family operation. It would be rash, of course, to draw any conclusions at this very stage of research. I discuss the problem in greater detail in "Towards a Sociology of the Bengali Intelligensia". Outsiders were very conscious of factionalism. Robert Carstairs, The Little World of an Indian District Officer, (London: MacMillan, 1912), pp. 97-103, discusses at length the Bengali phenomenon of dalādali (feuding), drawing on his knowledge of the influential and well-known Mukherjee family of Uttarpara. The Friend of India, January 29, 1857, p. 103, editorialized: "When three natives can combine without the third betraying the other two, Europeans may quit India".

[152] To my knowledge, none of the persons mentioned in this paper married outside their caste. The Ṭhākur family is apparently one exception. Outcaste brahmans, they seemed to have favored marriages with socially prestigeous kulīn brahman families.

[153] Travels, I, 36-7.

[154] Travels, I, 167-8.

[155] See the Calcutta Review, XXV (1855), pp. vii-ix, and Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy, Bāṅglā sāmayik patra, I, 106. A second volume of Kāyastha kaustabha was published in 1845, and a third in 1848. Bandyopādhyāy does not know if further volumes were issued; see p. 85. The Kaustabha

to Rājnārāyaṇ Basu, were drinking, gambling, whoring, an excessive love of things western, and a lack of national feeling and respect; see *Se kāl ār e kāl*, p. vii. Also see Debendranāth Ṭhākur, *Ātmacarit*, p. 69.

[136] Giriścandra Ghoṣ, *Selections*, pp. 59, 379, 387; Bholanath Chandra, *Travels*, I, 193; Romesh Chandra Datta, *Three Years in Europe, 1868-71*, (4th ed.; Calcutta: S. K. Lahiri & Co., 1896), p. 104. P. 203, and elsewhere, Datta stresses the need for hard work and labor in gaining success.

[137] Giriścandra Ghoṣ, *Selections*, p. 179. The Russian traveller, I. P. Minayeff, who visited Calcutta in 1886, reports that Pundit Maheścandra Nyāyāratna, Professor at Sanskrit College, told him that Bengali culture was dying, and that men like Surendranath Banerjea have become "perfect Englishmen". *Travels in and Diaries of India and Burma*, (Calcutta: Eastern Trading Company, n.d.), p. 122.

[138] For a brief description of both works, see Sukumar Sen, pp. 198-9, and p. 231. I have in preparation a study of the social types found in this literature.

[139] The scholarly edition is edited by Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and S. K. Dās, (Calcutta: Bāṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1940).

[140] In the *Hindoo Patriot*, August 10, 1854, *Selections*, p. 182. I believe his remarks were directed against the movements for the improvement of women, and particularly for widow remarriage, then being organized by Vidyasagar and others.

[141] *Travels*, I, 390.

[142] Śrāban, 1770 Saka (July-August, 1848), qu. B. B. Majumdar, p. 146. The Bengali phrase uses for denationalize is "want of feeling for one's native country (janmabhūmi)".

[143] The establishment of the Hindu Mela and similar national societies in the 1860's and 70's reflects the same dissatisfaction. See Jogeścandra Bāgal, *Bhārater Mukti-Sandhānī* [The Search for India's Freedom], (Calcutta: Popular Library, 1958), esp. pp. 62-74.

[144] *Speeches*, p. 19.

[145] *The Life of Girish Chandra Ghose*, pp. 203, 205. In an editorial in the *Hindoo Patriot*, February 26, 1857, Ghose remarked, "We are accused, and perhaps not without a sufficient reason, of lacking that public spirit and unity of aim and perception without which no nation can raise in the arts of civilized life or attain political eminence". *Selections*, p. 242.

[146] *Speeches*, p. 82.

[147] The quoted phrase from Ghoṣ, *Selections*, p. 242. For examples of personal and factional division see Chandra, *Digambar Mitra*, pp. 261-2,

kiraṇ was published for about two years, according to Bandyopadhyay, p, 106.

[156] From the legal standpoint, the changes in legal procedures under the British are well-documented. The desire of judges and scholars for authoritative texts and fixed rules resulted in the strengthening of dharmaśāstra at the expense of local customary law. An excellent and concise summary is given by Marc Galanter, "Hindu Law and the Development of the Modern Indian Legal System", (Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, 1964; mimeo), pp. 11-18. See also Sir Henry S. Maine, Village Communities in the East and West, (London: John Murray, 1895), pp. 31-60, 70-6, and 148-53. The effects of this change on Indian society is only imperfectly understood. The proliferation of caste associations and journals in the late nineteenth century is a well-known fact, but the aspirations of the organizers have never been investigated, to my knowledge. I would prove a most fruitful field of study for the social historian, I think.

[157] Jogeśandra Bāgal, Rādhākant Deb. ("Sāhitya-Sādhak-Caritmālā #20", 5th ed.; Calcutta: Baṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1957/8), p. 39. An organization, called the Dharmasabhā, was established in 1830 to oppose the measure; Rādhākant played a leading part in its direction. According to Sophia Collet, The Life and Letters of Rammohan Ray, (London, 1896), the petition of Deb carried 800 names; a counter-petition, presented by Ray, carried 300 names.

[158] Binay Ghoṣ, Vidyāsāgar, III, 196. Ghoṣ gives a full description, and interpretation, of the widow remarriage movement, pp. 160-230. Especially interesting is his description of the first widow remarriage to be held under the new law, in which he quotes from the account of the opposition, Sambād prabhākar. Surendranath Banerjea, writing in 1925, notes that the movement had made little headway by his day; A Nation in Making, pp. 8-9.

[159] The substance of these articles are reprinted in Manmathanāth Ghoṣ, Manīśrī Bholānāth Candra, (Calcutta: Gurudās Caṭṭopādhyāy & Sons, 1939/40), pp. 137-74; the quotation: p. 165. I. P. Minayeff, pp. 49-50, 54, 84, 92, and 101, reports criticism of British taxation and impoverishment of India, which he heard during a visit in 1880. On pp. 74, 77, 80, 82-3, 98 and 99, he notes general discontent expressed against the British.

[160] For December, 1872, pp. 337-42. There is evidence that Bankim did not wish this article to be published because of statements he made in it about certain British officials. It was published under a pseudonym. See Bankimcandra Chatterjee, Essays and Letters, ed. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Sanjanīkānta Dās, (Calcutta: Baṅgiya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1940), p. 193.

[161] Mookerjee's Magazine, p. 340.

[162] See N. S. Bose, The Indian Awakening and Bengal, pp. 170-4.

[163] *Hindu athabā presidensī kalej*, p. 12.

[164] Jatindra Mohan Datta has calculated that, even allowing for the fall in the purchasing power of the rupee, the relative income of landlords in Bengal rose from 6 in 1793 (the year of the Permanent Settlement), to 77 in 1872, and to 80 in 1931, i.e., relative stability after 1872: "Bāṅglārjamidārer kathā", [The Story of the Zamindars of Bengal], Bhāratbarṣa, XXXI: 2 (1945), qu. Nirmal Kumar Bose, "Calcutta", (mimeographed article), p. 3. See also Nirmal Kumar Bose, *Modern Bengal*, (Calcutta: Vidyālaya Library, n.d.), Chapters 3 and 4.

[165] One of the better-argued examples is Bruce McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 192-5. Bose, *Modern Bengal*, p. 65, also speaks of "shrinking employment".

[166] My objections to this argument are (1) that it is usually made without any supporting statistical evidence. Though McCully using government reports makes a guess at the size of the educated community, it is no more than a guess. We do not know how to define the community, and how large it was, let alone what percentage were unemployed; (2) that it is invoked too readily to explain a variety of changes, sometimes contradictory, in Indian society for nearly one hundred years, i.e., what might be called the theory of everincreasing unemployment: a problem in the 1870's, it became bad in 1890's, worse in the 1900's, worse still in the 1910's, even more worse in the 20's, etc. It explains, according to various authors, why Bengalis joined Banerjee in the 70's, drifted away in the 90's, came back in the 1900's, left in the teens to join Gandhi, left Gandhi in the 20's to join Bose, etc., it simultaneously explains why Bengalis were (a) Indian nationalists, (b) Bengali nationalists, (c) communalists, and (d) politically ineffective; (3) that it violates the economic law of supply and demand, i.e., a society will not indefinitely produce people trained in skills for which there is no demand; and, (4) that it is dubious psychologically: no group of individuals, even supposedly fatalistic Indians, will continue for a century to pursue a course of action which leads only to misery and poverty. Despite these objections, it is clear that a large number of Bengalis, including contemporary observers, believed that educated unemployment was increasing and a serious problem. In influencing behavior, this belief was perhaps more important than the actual reality.

[167] J. C. Ghosh, *Bengali Literature*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), p. 99.

[168] Sir George Sansom, *The Western World and Japan*, (rev. ed.; New York: Knopf, 1962), p. 311.

[169] I cannot speak as an authority on Bengali literature, but I think it fair to say that most critics are agreed that such writers as Michael Madhusūdan Datta, Īśvarcandra Bidyāsāgar, Bankimcandra Chatterjee, and Rabindranath Tagore are distinctively Bengali writers. The other point which the assertion of mere borrowing overlooks is the intellectual's

discovery and employment of indigenous literary forms. For an example, see Edward C. Dimock, Jr., "Rabindranath Tagore--'The Greatest of the Bāuls of Bengal'", Journal of Asian Studies, XIX (November, 1959), 33-51.

[170] Sansom, p. 308.

[171] I would like to thank Mr. Ronald Inden for drawing my attention to the absence of a literature of confession. I can think of at least one major exception to my statement about change, Michael Madhusūdan Datta. No doubt there are other individuals to whom it would not apply; but I think it is fair statement to make about the great majority.

[172] In making these comparisons with Victorian England, I have relied upon Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, G. M. Young, Victorian England: Portrait of an Age, (New York, 1937), and Asa Briggs, Victorian People, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955). All along I have assumed there was some influence the other way, though unfortunately historians of modern England have by and large ignored the subject. But in doing this, they have not acted very differently than their nineteenth-century countrymen.

[173] For an example of the intellectual's ability to accommodate different styles, see my paper, "Rajendralal Mitra and Scholarly Apologetics", Comparative Studies in Society and History, (forthcoming).

[174] See N. S. Bose, The Indian Awakening and Bengal, pp. 34-7; and Stephen Hay, Sources of Indian Tradition, pp. 15, 19-20; though Hay does not mention Deb by name, the inference is clear. Commenting on this dispute, Professor David Kopf has written in a recent paper, "I doubt strongly if there was a so-called 'liberal' or 'modernist' group led by Rammohan Ray and a 'conservative' or 'traditionalist' group guided by Radhakant Deb . . .", "Orientalism and the Bengali Intelligentsia Between Revival and Modernity, 1800-1830", (mimeo) p. 11. One might also ask whether, given the nature of Hinduism, the word 'orthodox' carried any precise meaning. The term 'doctrinaire', sometimes encountered, is even worse in this respect.

[175] On Deb, see the brief biography by Bāgal referred to above, p. 46. He was the chief editor of a Sanskrit encyclopedia, the Sabda-kalpadruma, which won praise in Europe, a member of the Asiatic Society, a director of Hindu College, Secretary of the Calcutta School Book Society, Vice-President of the Agricultural and Horticultural Society, and President of the British Indian Association. Unjustly maligned by the champions of Rāmmohan Rāy, he deserves a full biographical study.

[176] Turkey, too, seems to have benefited from long exposure to the west. As in India, change was gradual: according to Bernard Lewis, the first signs of modernization appeared in the late eighteenth-century, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 40 64 and 474.

[177] See Morris David Morris, "Toward a Reinterpretation of Nineteenth-

Century Indian Economic History", *Journal of Economic History*, XXIII; 4 (December, 1963), pp. 606-18.

[178] In saying this I do not mean to detract from Gandhi's role in keeping the nationalist movement non-violent, nor Nehru's in keeping the movement alive and the country unified. The fact that the country produced a Gandhi and a Nehru says volumes for the quality of modern Indian culture. W. H. Morris-Jones, *The Government and Politics of India*, (London: Hutchinson, 1964), pp. 26-7, stresses the importance of time as a factor in the development of the nationalist movement.

[179] The need of Muslims to assert, or William Cantwell Smith would say, to re-establish, an historical identity is very strong. See *Islam in Modern History*, (New York: Mentor Books), Chapters 1 and 2. G. E. von Grunebaum, *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), elaborates this theme in two essays, "Self-image and Approach to History," (pp. 129-171), and "The Intellectual Problem of Westernization in the Self-View of the Arab World", (pp. 172-243). He asserts that the need to establish an identity in time is a cultural imperative for the historically-conscious Muslim; to do this he is compelled to make what von Grunebaum calls a "creative misinterpretation".

[180] Giriścandra Ghoṣ wrote in the *Hindoo Patriot*, May 21, 1857, that the sepoys were "rash and ignorant". See *Selections*, p. 263. "It was hope against hope", said Bholānāth Chandra, *Travels*, I, 339. In the north-west, however, where Bengalis were closely associated, and often identified with, the British, they feared for their lives. Chandra relates many interesting stories. See also Debendranāth Thākur, who was in the north-west during the Mutiny, *Ātmajībanī*, pp. 246 and elsewhere.

[181] Another variation on the same game played in Japan. Here reformers made the Tokugawa *shoguns* the devils. With a slight disregard for the facts, they proclaimed the Tokugawas interlopers who had betrayed the true Japan. In restoring the Meiji Emperor to the throne in order to save the country from the Western menace, reformers could argue that, far from betraying their cultural heritage, they were only setting matters right. The connection between nationalism and modernization in Japan has been stressed by many writers. See for example, Hugh Borton, *Japan's Modern Century*, (New York: Ronald Press. 1955). Communist leaders in the Soviet Union and China offer some obvious example of the use of nationalism to promote change. Here, of course, the villians are the foreign capitalists.

[182] It is sometimes argued to the opposite conclusion that leaders could afford to advance liberal ideas and grand schemes because they did not have to deliver the goods. There is some truth in this, no doubt, but the argument is not in the last analysis acceptable. There is every indication that intellectuals were ready to assume a share of power and responsibility, but found the way blocked.

[183] On this loyalty of the intellectual in China, see Earl Swisher,

"Chinese Intellectuals Under Western Impact, 1838-1900", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, I (October, 1958), 26-37. On this problem for the Indian Muslims, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islām in India: a social analysis*, (Lahore, 1943).

[184] Ronald Inden, "The Localization of the Hindu Elite of Bengal and its Effects on the Policy of the Southeastern Bengal Chiefdoms", (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1963), is an interesting picture of the operation of what Karl Marx called the 'little kingdoms' of Indian society. Marc Galanter, "Hindu Law and the Development of the Modern Indian Legal System", pp. 3-7, points out the large areas of law which the formal codes (*dharmaśāstra*) left to custom and local practice, the "directory rather than mandatory" character of the legal system.

[185] I give a number of examples in "Towards a Sociology of the Bengali Intelligentsia".

[186] Hence the famous passage in Bankimcandra Chatterjee's *Ānandamaṭh*, ed. Brajendranāth Bandyopādhyāy and Sajanīkānta Dās, ("Baṅkim-Satabartika-Saṅgskran", Calcutta: Baṅgīya Sāhitya Pariṣad, 1938/9), pp.116-18. See also above, pp. 131-132.

[187] Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: The Problem of Intellectual Continuity*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958) discusses the problem in detail, see especially pp. xxiii-xxix. He is concerned with the sorts of problems that faced the Chinese intellectual as he came to realize that the standards and values of his own culture were not universal, and that the western world represented a challenge beyond the ability of his culture to overcome. This does not appear to have been a significant problem for Bengali intellectuals, though it may have troubled the Muslim literati of northern India.

[188] It is well to remember that foreign contact, even foreign rule need not necessarily effect belief in the universality of one's own values. G. E. von Grunebaum has noted that for eight centuries three civilizations shared the Mediterranean world: Islam, Greece, Christianity, and Latin Christianity. Despite wars and conquest, commercial and intellectual intercourse, "Each civilization was convinced of its spiritual superiority, of possessing the unadulterated truth, of contributing, by and large, the best adjustment to the business of living ever made". *Medieval Islam*, (2nd ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 7. Henri Frankfort cites the example of the remarkably conservative Egyptian civilization which survived the many vicissitudes of its long history, including foreign conquest by technologically-superior peoples, with its essential features undisturbed. *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East*, (New York: Anchor Books, 1956), Chapter 1. Even the coming of the modern west need not necessarily disturb the sense of universality. Levinson, p. 75, writes concerning the Confucian scholar-administrator Tseng Kuo-Fan (1811-75): "He remained certain of the universality of Chinese spiritual values; nevertheless, his Chinese ethnocentrism was not that of a man whose complacency has never been challenged, but of one who has known a rival claim and disposes of it."

[189] According to Bernard Lewis, it was important for Muslims to recognize that being modern did not mean being Christian. He suggests that this is the reason the Turks watched indifferently the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment of west, responding only when the French revolution opened the possibility of modernization on purely secular lines. I do not mean to imply that Christianity created no problem for educated Bengalis. The response of the intelligentsia to the mystic Ramakrishna, who found in Christianity only another way to truth, suggests just the opposite. His uninvolved, and often sharp appraisals of Christianity contrast markedly with the emotion-laden responses of his modernizing countrymen.

[190] Jawaharlal Nehru is often cited as an Indian example. See the famous passage in his autobiography beginning, "I have become a queer mixture of the East and West, out of place everywhere, at home nowhere". Toward Freedom, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), p. 353.

[191] See, for example, Albert Camus, who writes in The Rebel, p. 11, of "the reality of today; which is logical crime". On the Victorian belief in the possibility of ultimate truths, see Houghton, pp. 13-4.

[192] Sansom refers to the "remarkably capable leaders" of the Japanese Restoration, p. 313; while Bernard Lewis praises the Turkish leaders for their "cool realism and practical sense". He continues, "They have been able to assess situations and define objectives--to make decisions related to facts, and to abide by them". p. 447.